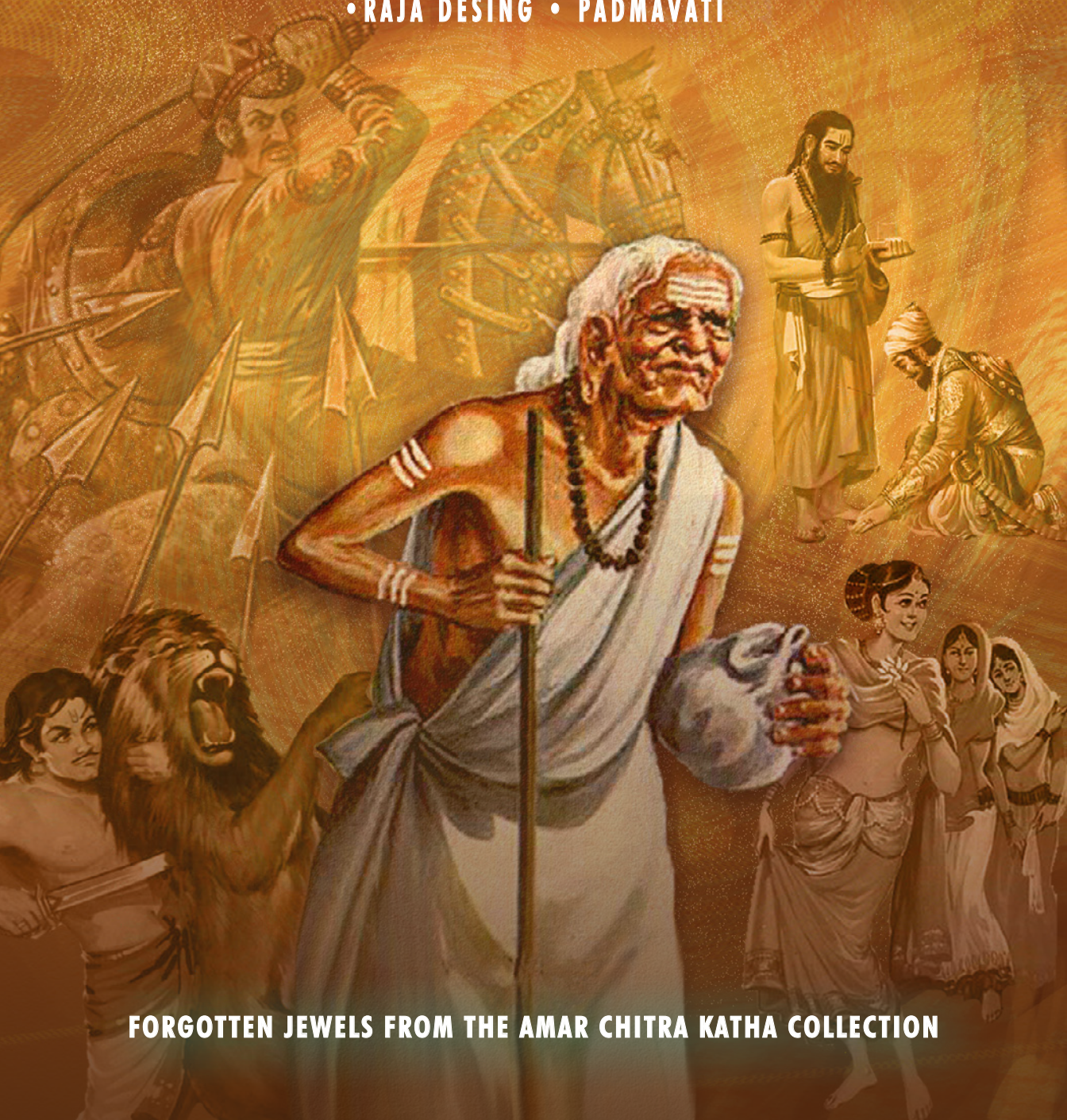




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TALES OF AVVAIYAAR

SCRIPT: Gayatri Madan Dutt **ILLUSTRATIONS:** G. R. Naik **EDITOR:** Anant Pai

SHRIDATTA

SCRIPT: Lakshmi Sesnadri **ILLUSTRATIONS:** V. B. Halbe **EDITOR:** Anant Pai

SAMARTH RAMDAS

SCRIPT: S.S. Apte & Gayatri Madan Dutt **ILLUSTRATIONS:** Dilip Kadam **EDITOR:** Anant Pai

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SCRIPT: Dev Nadkarni **ILLUSTRATIONS:** Ram Waeerker **EDITOR:** Anant Pai

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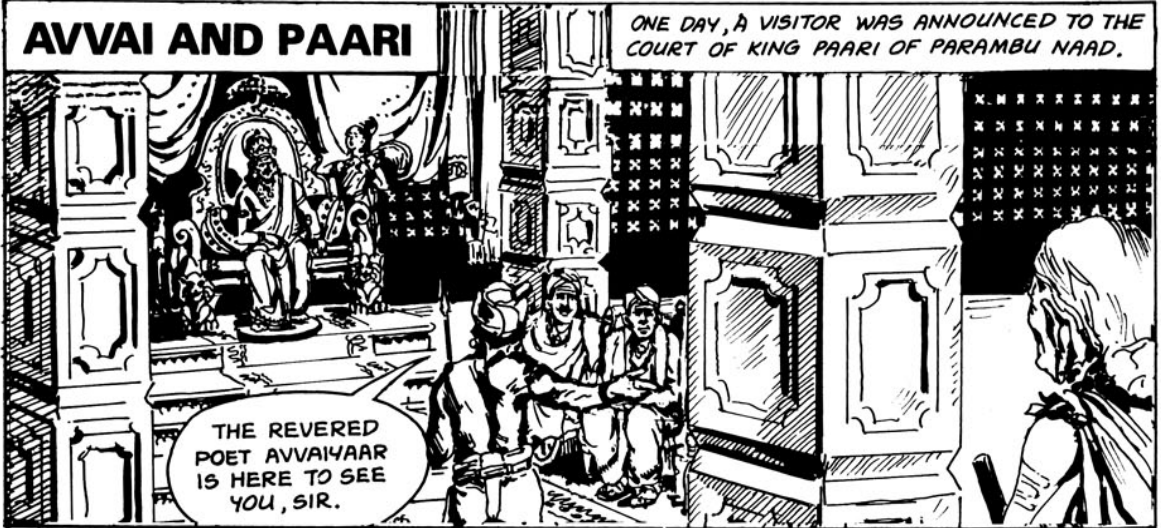
TALES OF AVVAIYAAR

A POET SAINT OF TAMILNADU



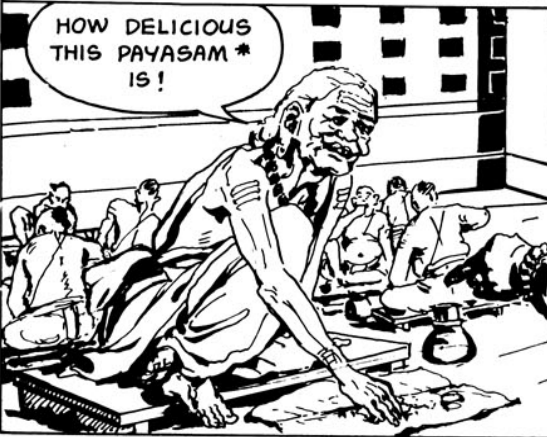
AVVAI AND PAARI

ONE DAY, A VISITOR WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE COURT OF KING PAARI OF PARAMBU NAAD.





AFTER AVVAI HAD A WASH, PAARI LED HER TO THE DINING-CHAMBER OF THE PALACE.



IN THIS MANNER, MANY DAYS FLEW BY.

* A SWEET DISH MADE OF MILK AND RICE



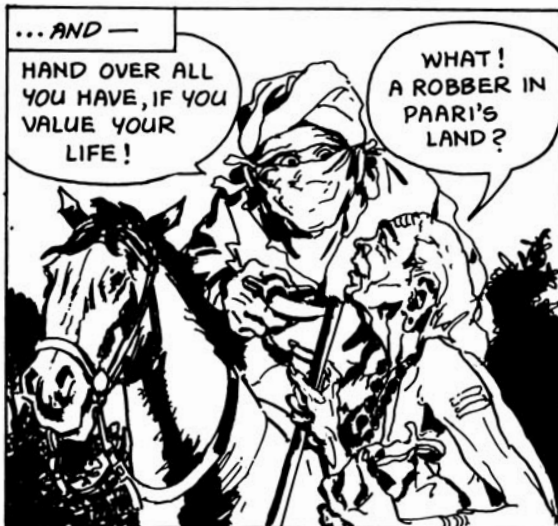
... A FIGURE RODE TOWARDS HER...



... AND —

HAND OVER ALL
YOU HAVE, IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE!

WHAT!
A ROBBER IN
PAARI'S
LAND?



ALL RIGHT, HERE
YOU ARE! BUT YOUR
KING WILL HEAR OF
THIS, BELIEVE ME.

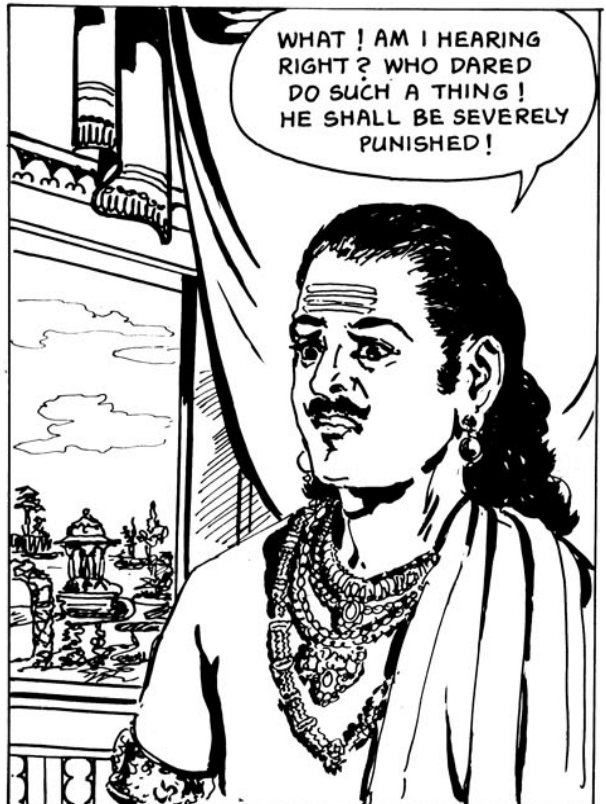


WHEN THE ROBBER
HAD RIDDEN AWAY...



... AVVAI MADE HER WAY BACK TO
THE PALACE.









THEN, LEAVING PAARI'S KINGDOM, AVVAI CONTINUED ON HER WANDERINGS. ONE DAY, HER PATH LED HER THROUGH A VAST STRETCH OF BARREN COUNTRY.



AS SHE WALKED ON, HUNGER AND THIRST BEGAN TO TORMENT HER.

NOT A SINGLE
FRUIT-BEARING TREE!
NOT A STREAM OF WATER
IN SIGHT!



SOMEHOW SHE STAGGERED ON TILL...



...AT LAST —

A JAMUN* TREE!
IS IT REAL? OR
AM I SEEING
THINGS?



AVVAI APPROACHED THE TREE AND SAT EXHAUSTED UNDER IT.

FOR THE STRENGTH
TO SHAKE THE FRUIT
DOWN, I WOULD
FIRST HAVE TO EAT
A FEW OF THEM!



* A LUSCIOUS DARK VIOLET FRUIT

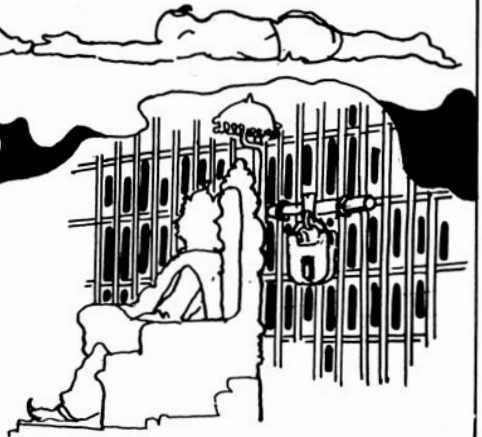
EVEN THERE, TRAPPED IN SUCH A SITUATION, AVVAI DID NOT LOSE HER SENSE OF HUMOUR.

NOW, WHEN THIS STOMACH CANNOT GET A THING TO EAT, HOW KEENLY IT HUNGERS FOR YOUR PAYASAM, PAARI!

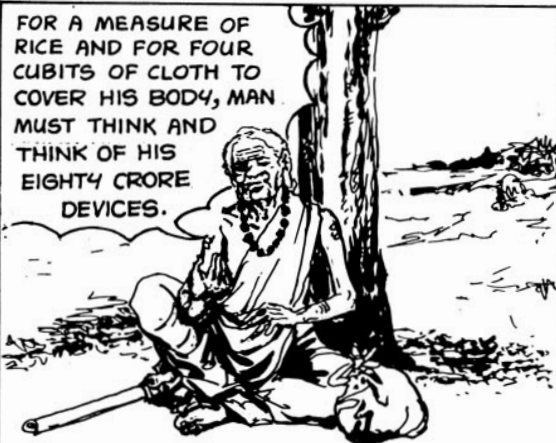


"O MY BAG OF TROUBLES, IF I ASK YOU TO MANAGE WITHOUT FOOD FOR ONE DAY, YOU CANNOT. YET, WHEN YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN IN ENOUGH FOR DAYS TO COME, YOU DID NOT AGREE. NEVER WILL YOU UNDERSTAND MY TROUBLES. YOU ARE A DIFFICULT ONE TO LIVE WITH!"

WE BOW TO THE UNDESERVING, WE CROSS THE SEAS, WE PUT ON MANY ACTS, WE ENSLAVE PEOPLE AND RULE OVER THEM, WE SING THE PRAISES OF ALL KINDS OF MEN— ALL FOR A MEASURE OF RICE FOR THIS TYRANT.



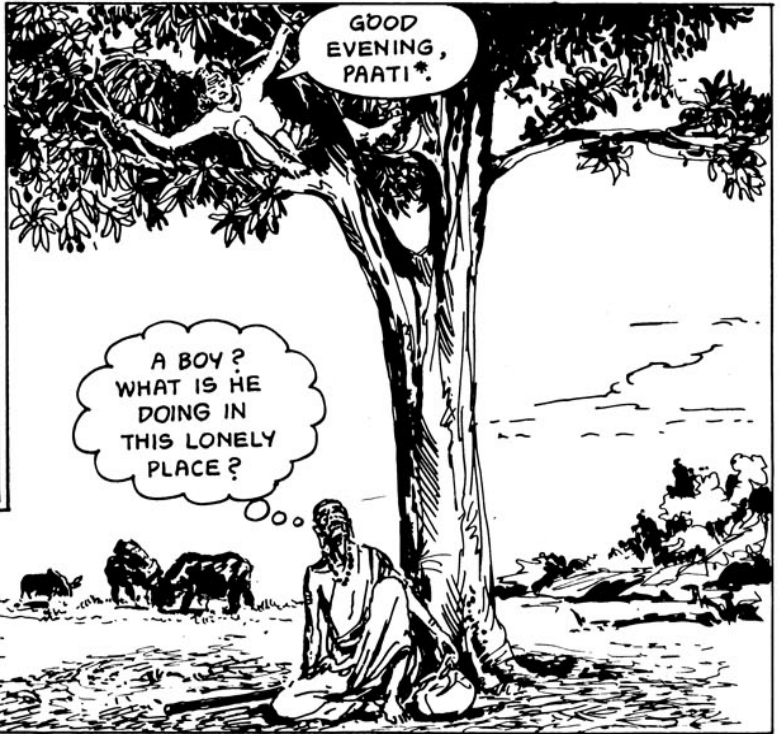
FOR A MEASURE OF RICE AND FOR FOUR CUBITS OF CLOTH TO COVER HIS BODY, MAN MUST THINK AND THINK OF HIS EIGHTY CRORE DEVICES.



AVVAI LAUGHED AT THESE VERSES, COMPOSED ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!



THEN SHE BEGAN TO MUSE.
SUDDENLY A VOICE BROKE
INTO HER THOUGHTS.



GOOD
EVENING,
PAATI*.

A BOY?
WHAT IS HE
DOING IN
THIS LONELY
PLACE?



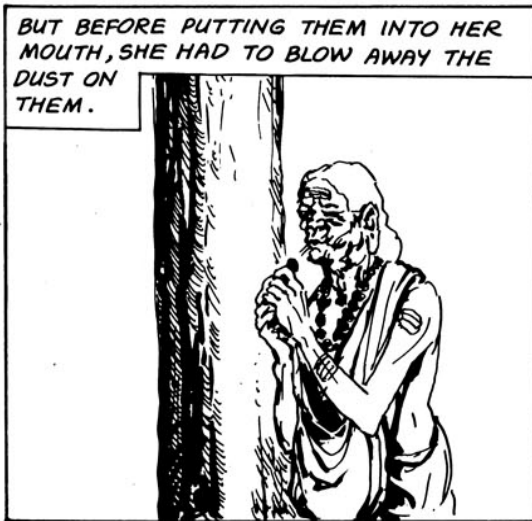
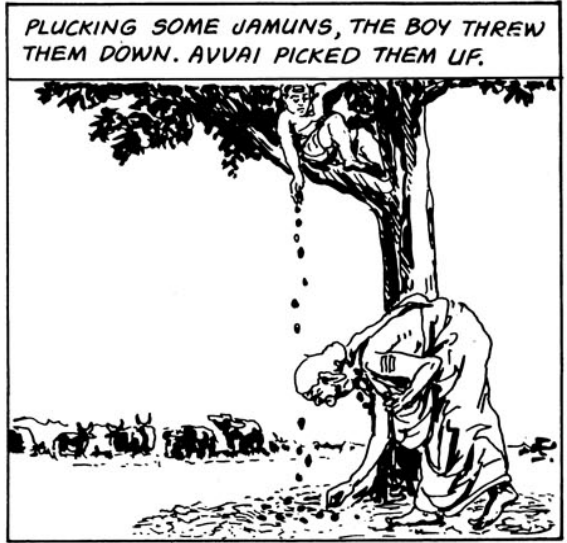
MY CHILD,
I AM TIRED AND
HUNGRY. WILL
YOU THROW ME
SOME FRUIT?



CERTAINLY,
PAATI! DO YOU
WANT HOT FRUIT
OR COLD?

HOT FRUIT
OR COLD? HE'S
TEASING ME.
I WILL
HUMOUR HIM.







SUDDENLY, AVVAI UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BOY HAD MADE A PUN ON THE WORD "HOT".

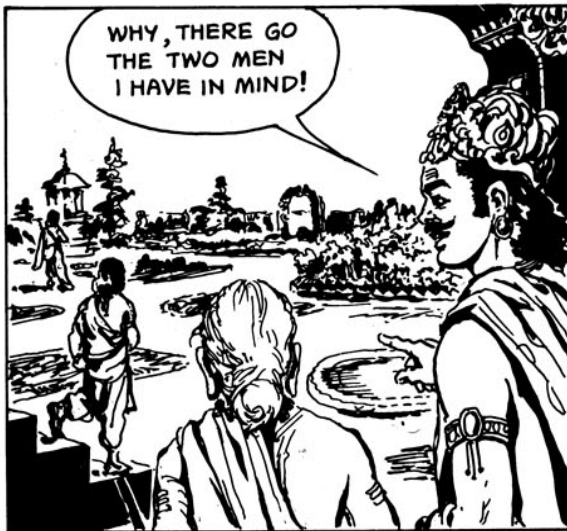


THE SOLE CONSIDERATION

AVVAI WAS A RENOWNED TAMIL POETESS. SHE OFTEN VISITED THE COURTS OF KINGS WHERE SHE WAS WELCOMED WITH WARMTH AND HEARD WITH RESPECT.



AH, AVVAI. I'VE BEEN THINKING OF YOU. I HAVE TO APPOINT A NEW MINISTER. I NEED YOUR ADVICE.



WHY, THERE GO THE TWO MEN I HAVE IN MIND!



ONE IS KNOWN TO BE A CAPABLE, JUST MAN.

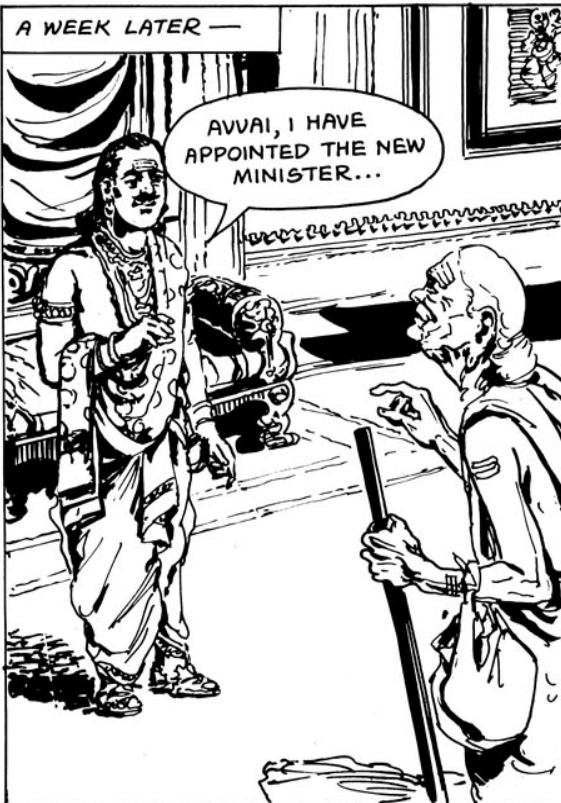


THE OTHER IS MY COUSIN.



DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE WISER TO APPOINT MY RELATIVE RATHER THAN ONE WHO IS IN NO WAY CONNECTED WITH ME?

I AM NOT SO SURE.



VARAPPUYARA

ONCE AVVAI WAS INVITED TO A KINGDOM WHERE AN ASSEMBLY OF POETS WAS TO BE HELD. AS USUAL, SHE WALKED ALL THE WAY THERE.



THIS SPRING, TOO, IS DRYING UP.

WILL THE DROUGHT THIS TIME MEAN THE DEATH OF US ALL?



THE CROPS ARE RUINED. WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR FOOD?



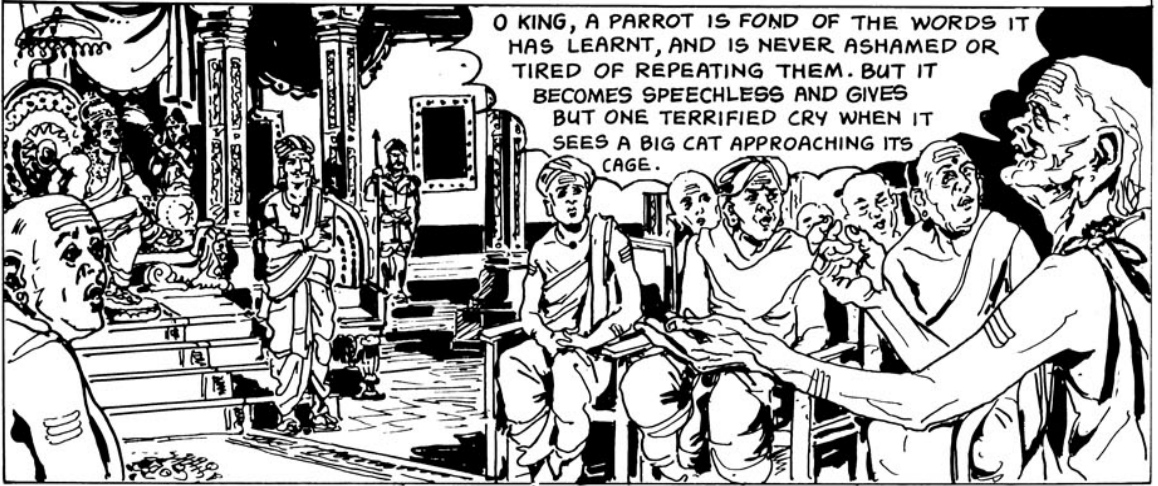
AVVAI REACHED THE PALACE AS THE POETS BEGAN TO READ OUT THEIR COMPOSITIONS.



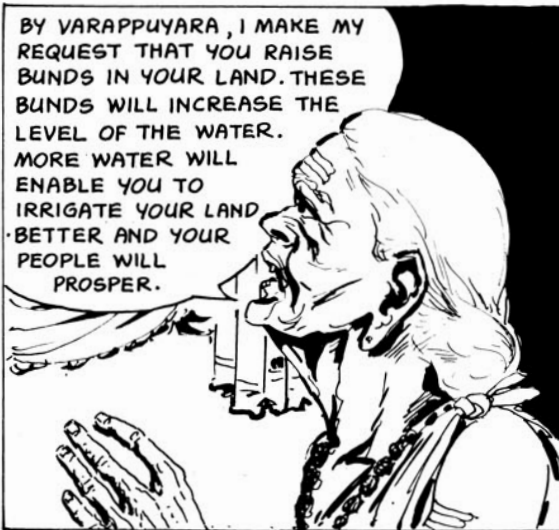
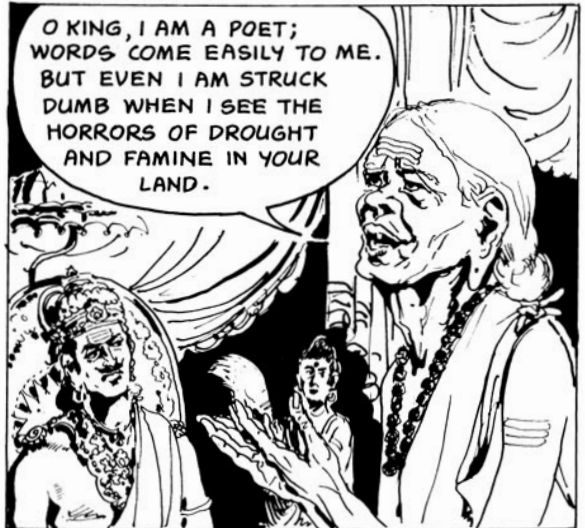
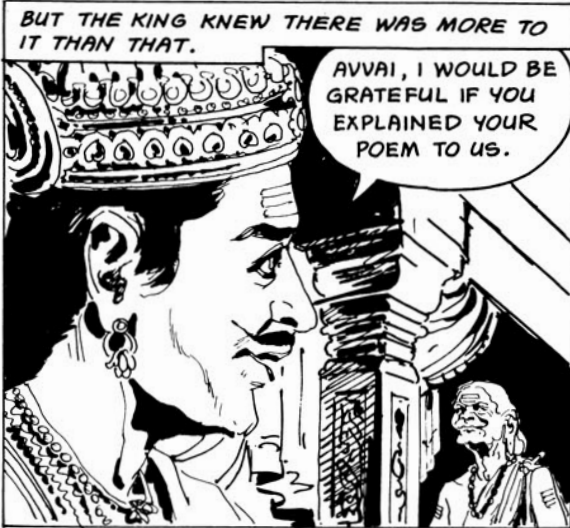
ONE AFTER ANOTHER THEY PRAISED THE KING AND BLESSED HIM WITH A LONG LIFE AND A PROSPEROUS REIGN.

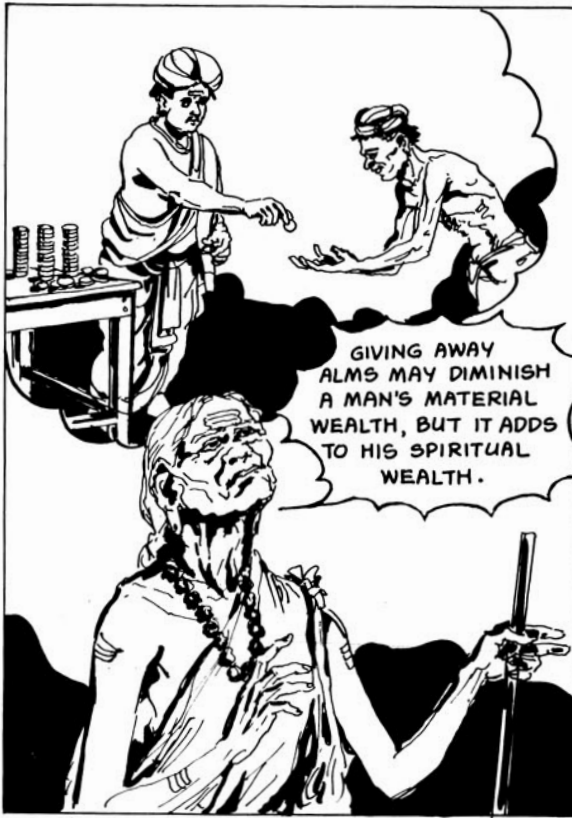


FINALLY, AVVAI ROSE TO HER FEET. EVERYONE WAITED EAGERLY TO HEAR HER COMPOSITION.



* LET BUNDS BE RAISED. (VARAPPU UYARA)

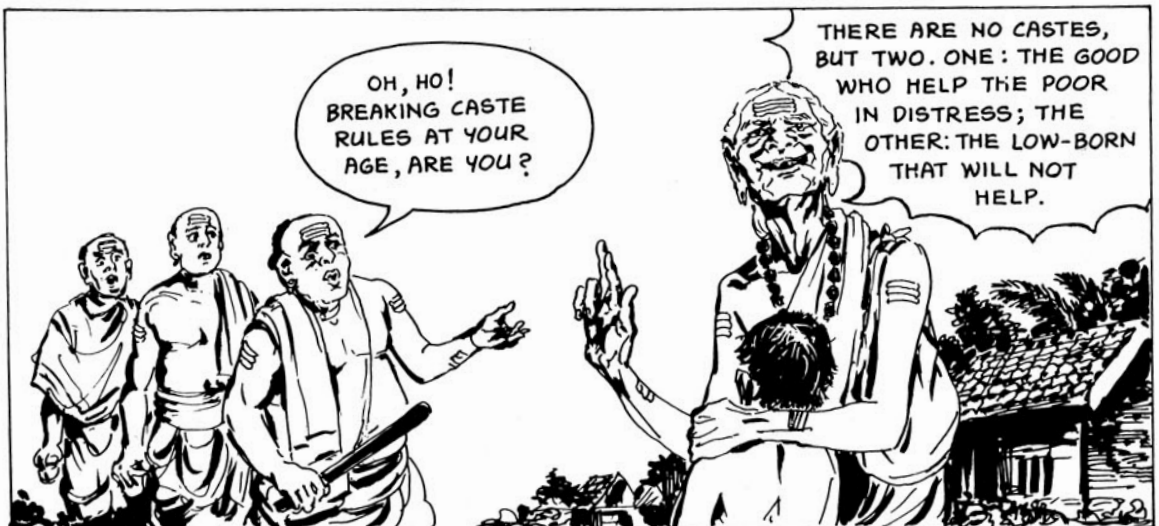


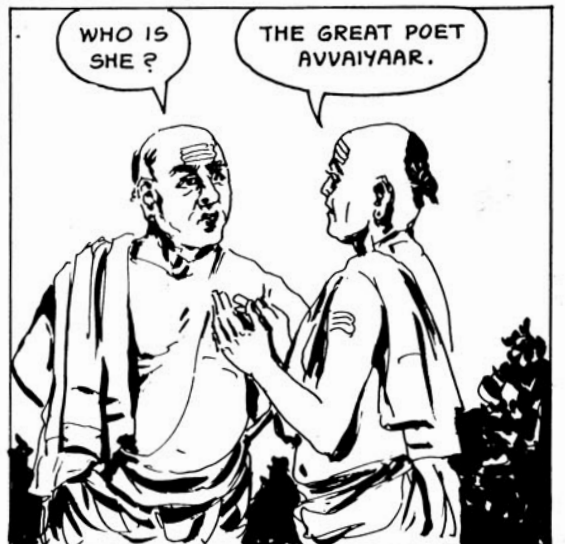
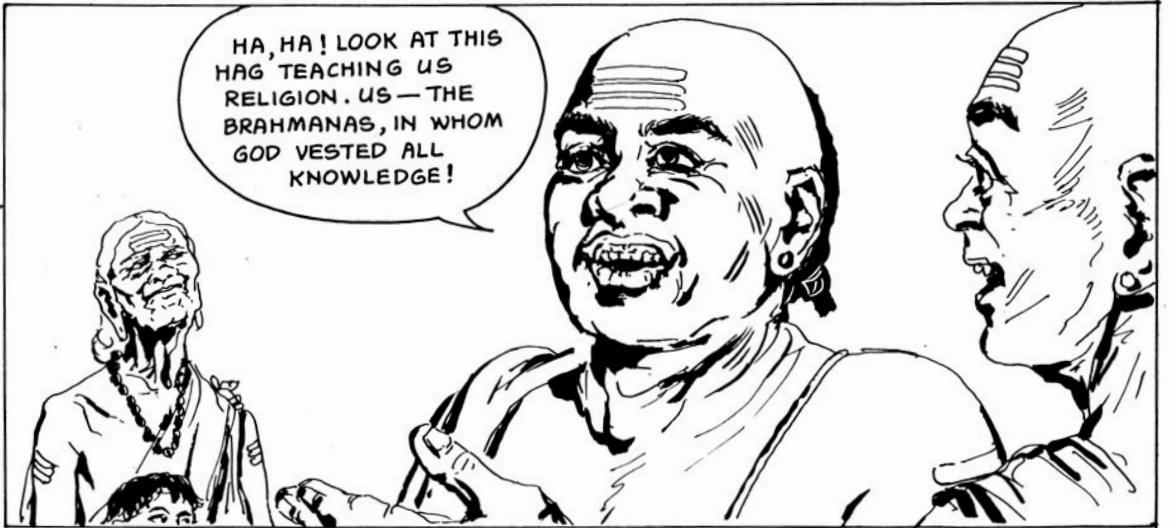
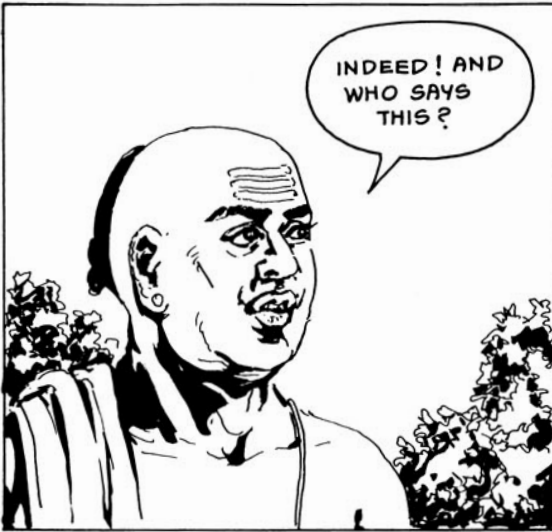


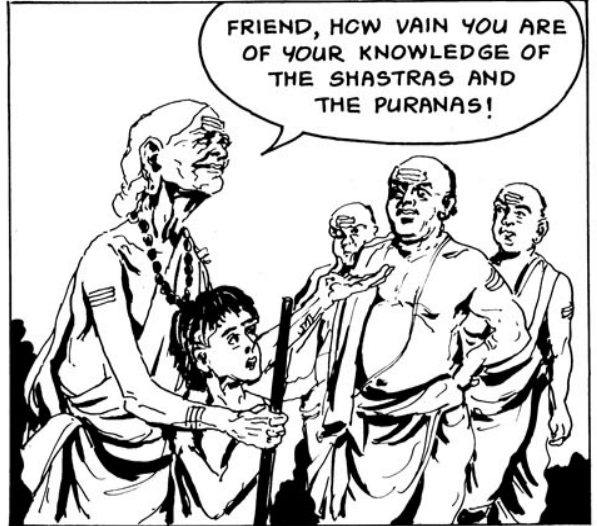
AVVAI TO THE RESCUE

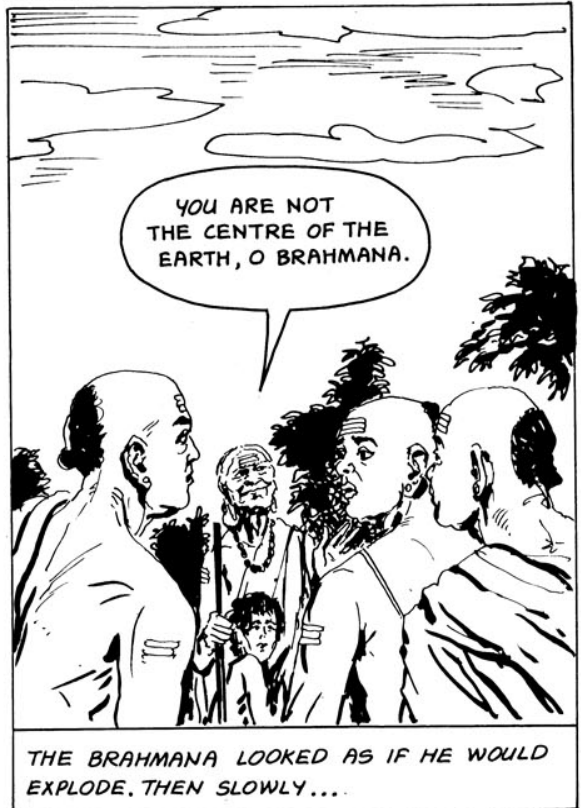
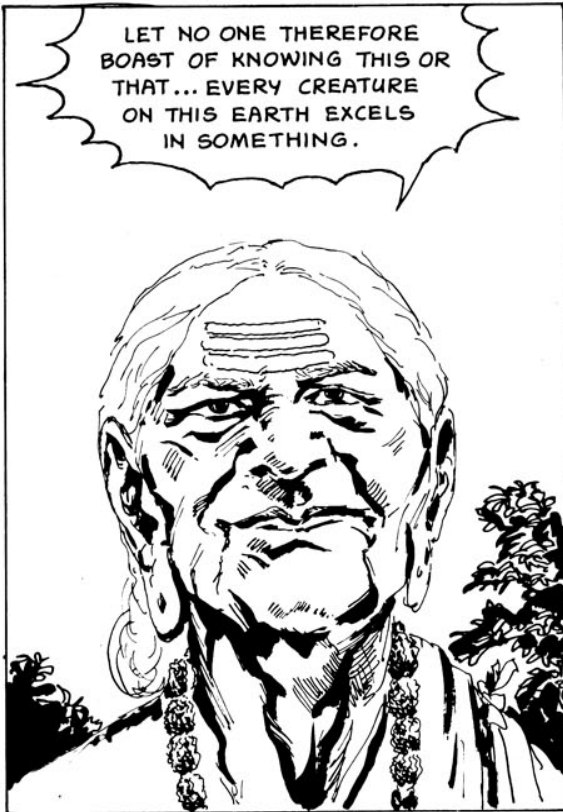
ONE DAY, AS AVVAI WAS PASSING THROUGH A VILLAGE —





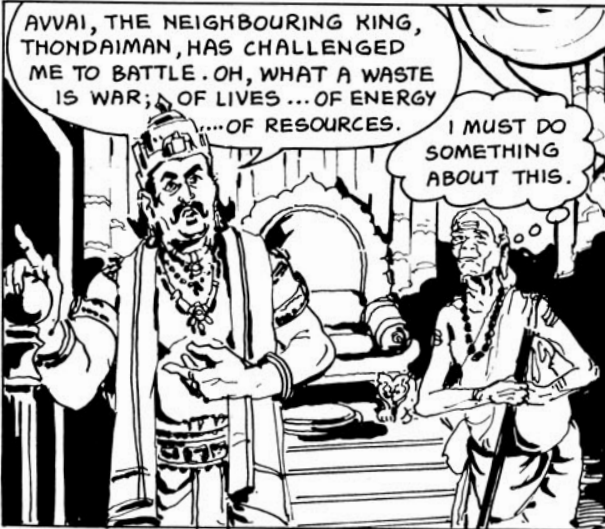






AVVAI AND ADAIYAMAN

AVVAI OFTEN SPENT TIME IN THE KINGDOM OF THE MIGHTY KING ADAIYAMAN, WHOM SHE HELD AS ONE OF HER DEAREST FRIENDS. ONE DAY —



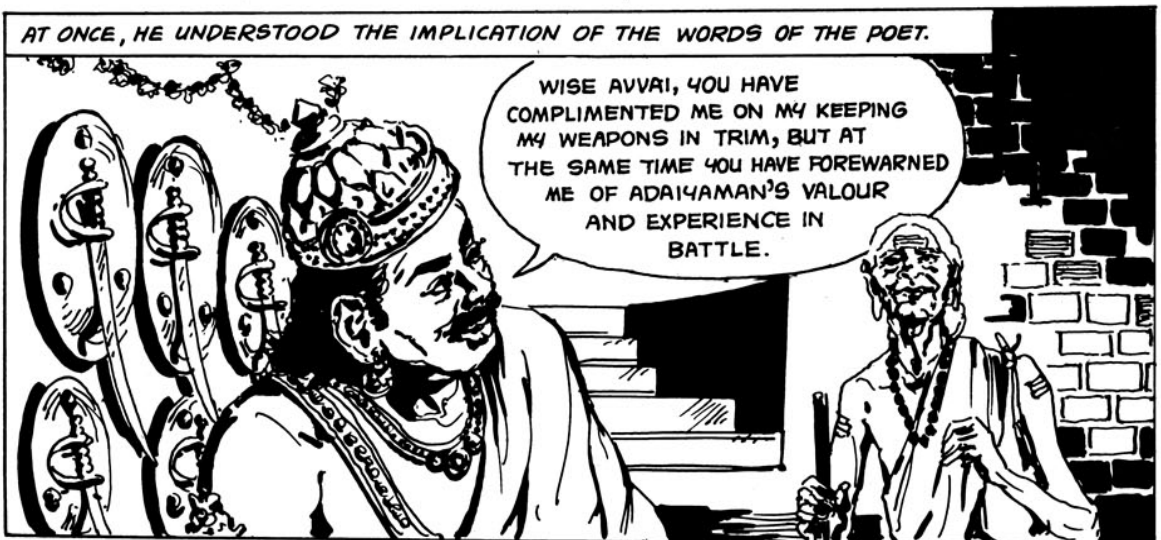
... WHERE SHE WAS RECEIVED CORDIALLY.

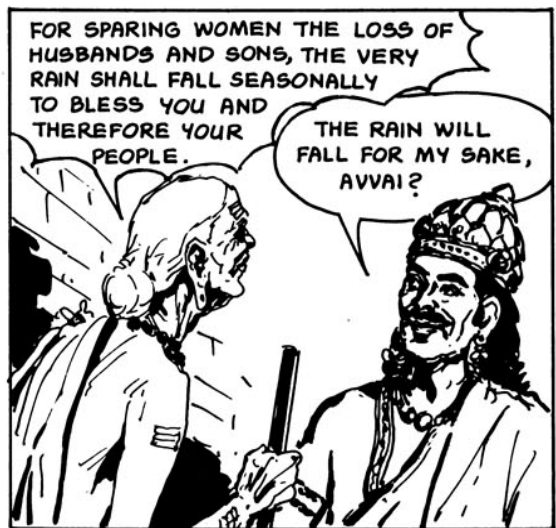


AND AT THE ARMOURY, THONDAIMAN PROUDLY SHOWED AVVAI HIS ARRAY OF WEAPONS.



THONDAIMAN LOOKED THOUGHTFULLY AT HIS GLEAMING WEAPONS THAT HAD NOT KNOWN MANY WARS.





AVVAI THEN RETURNED TO ADAIYAMAN WHO WAS VERY HAPPY TO LEARN THAT AVVAI HAD AVERTED A NEEDLESS WAR. HE PRESENTED HER WITH AN UNUSUAL GIFT.



AVVAI ATE THE BERRY.

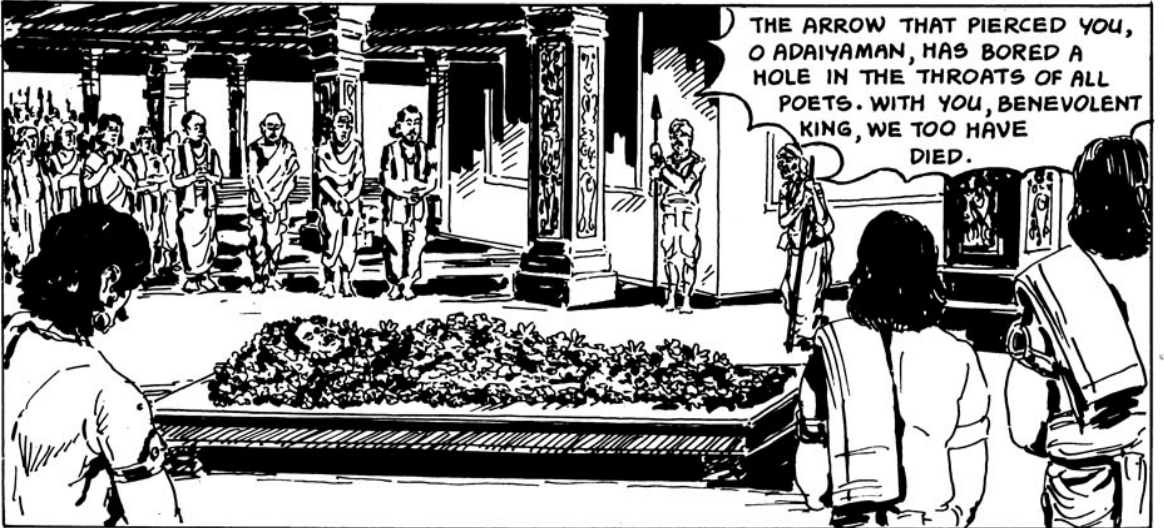


BUT BEFORE LONG, ADAIYAMAN WAS FORCED TO GO TO WAR WITH ANOTHER KING, AND IN THAT BATTLE, LOST HIS LIFE.



AVVAI WAS PLUNGED IN SORROW.

IF HE HAD PLENTY, HE SHARED IT WITH US. IF THERE WAS LITTLE HE DENIED HIMSELF; HE ACCOMPANIED US ON THE PATH OF LOVE, BUT HE WALKED ALONE ON THE PATH OF WAR.



THE ARROW THAT PIERCED YOU, O ADAIYAMAN, HAS BORED A HOLE IN THE THROATS OF ALL POETS. WITH YOU, BENEVOLENT KING, WE TOO HAVE DIED.

TO THIS DAY AVVAI'S POEMS ARE SUNG...



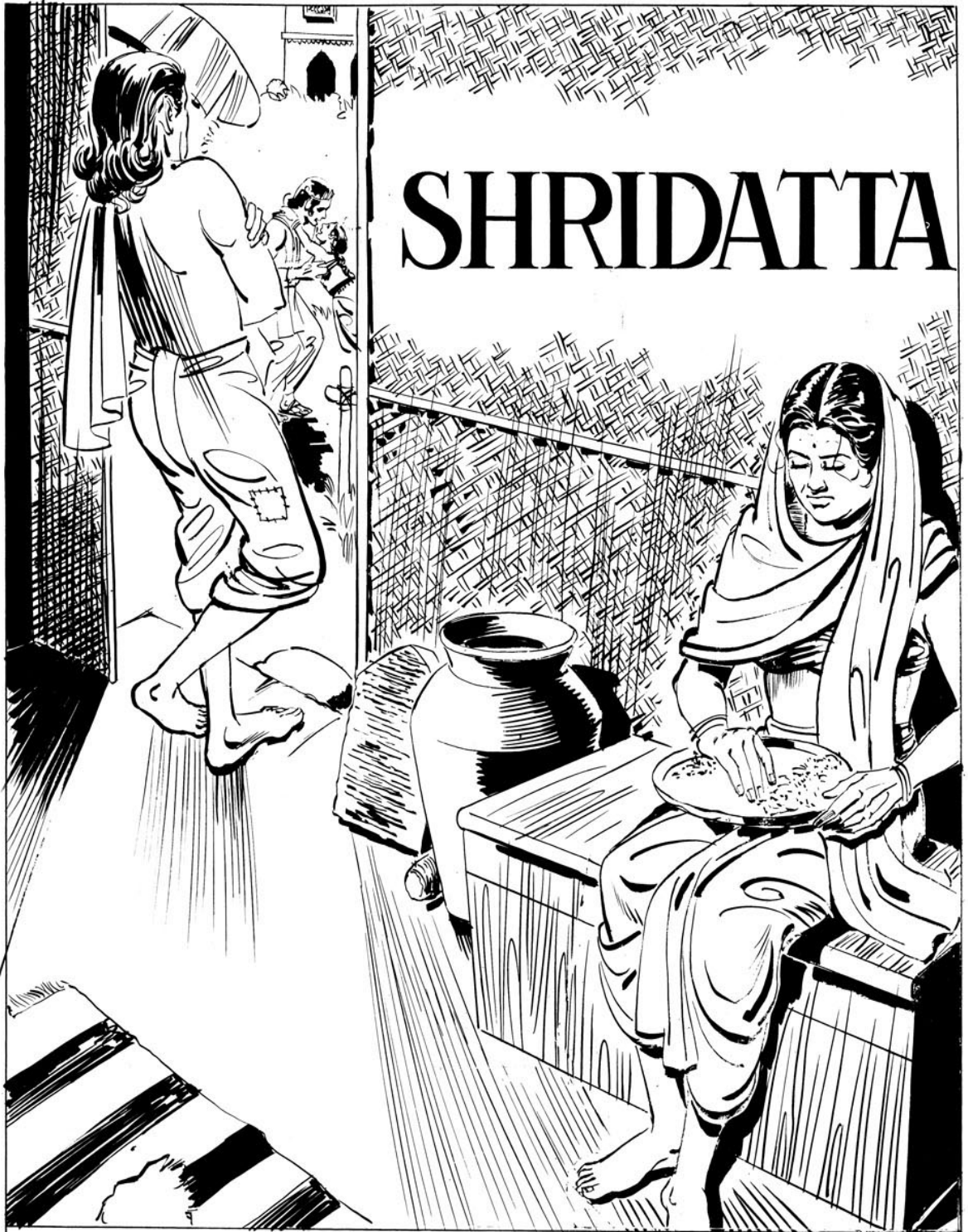
... AND LITTLE CHILDREN IN TAMIL NADU BEGIN THEIR SCHOOLING WITH HER ALPHABET VERSES.



SHRIDATTA



SHRIDATTA



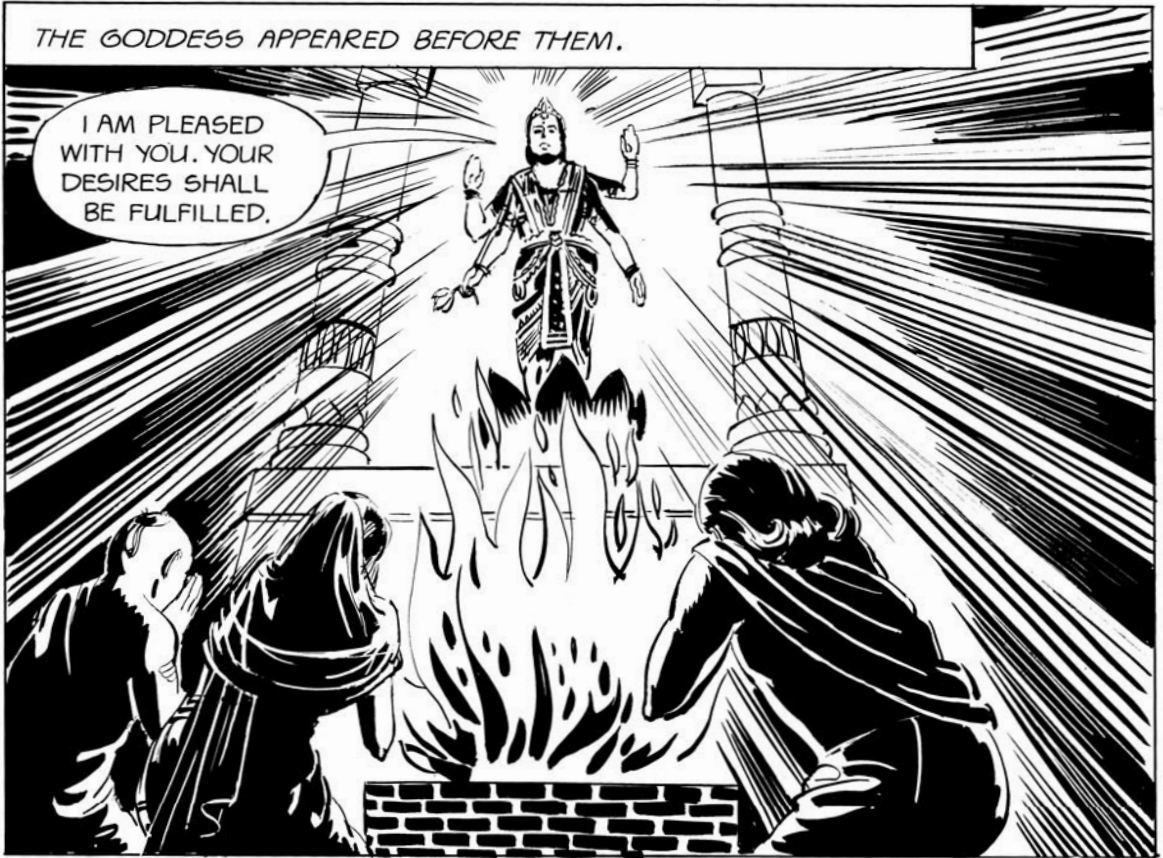
KALANEMI AND HIS WIFE LIVED IN THE CITY OF PATALIPUTRA.
THEY WERE VERY POOR. THEY HAD NO CHILDREN.



SO THEY PERFORMED A SACRIFICE TO SHRIDEVI, THE GODDESS OF WEALTH.



THE GODDESS APPEARED BEFORE THEM.



SOON, A SON WAS BORN TO THEM.



LET US CALL HIM SHRIDATTA AS HE IS A GIFT OF SHRIDEVI.

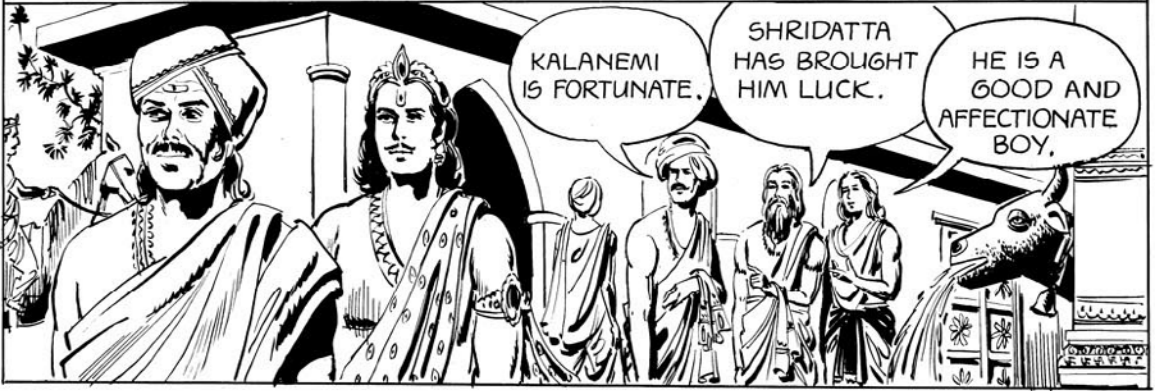




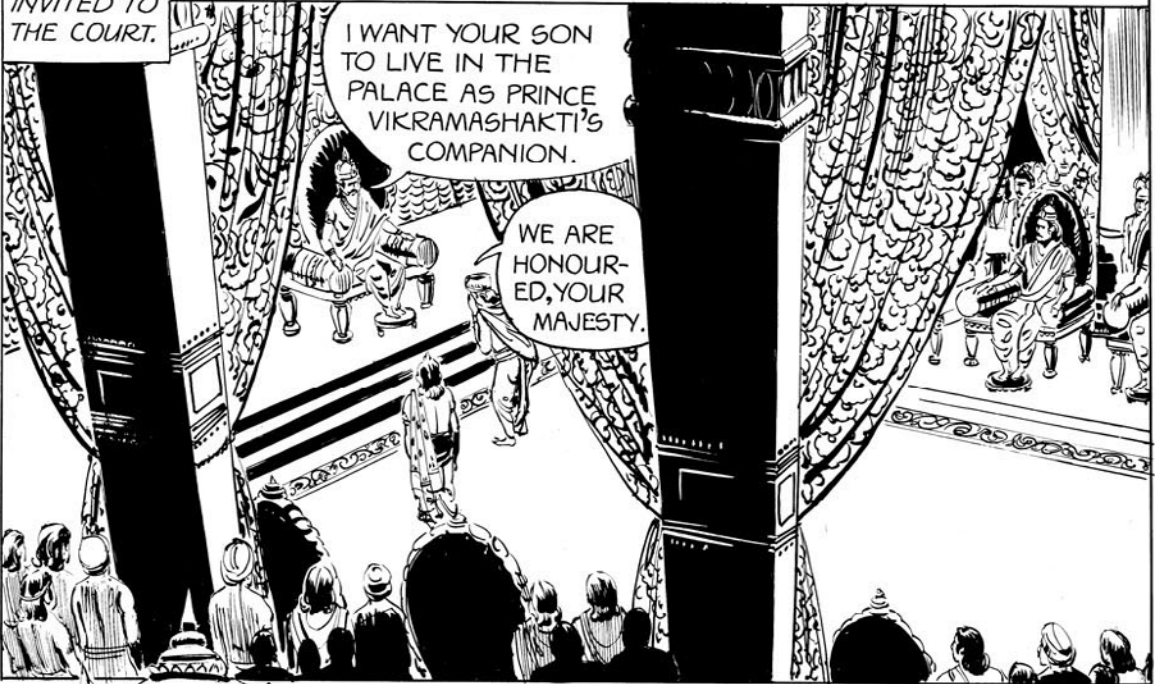
...THE FINE ARTS...



HE GREW UP AS GOOD AS HE WAS TALENTED.



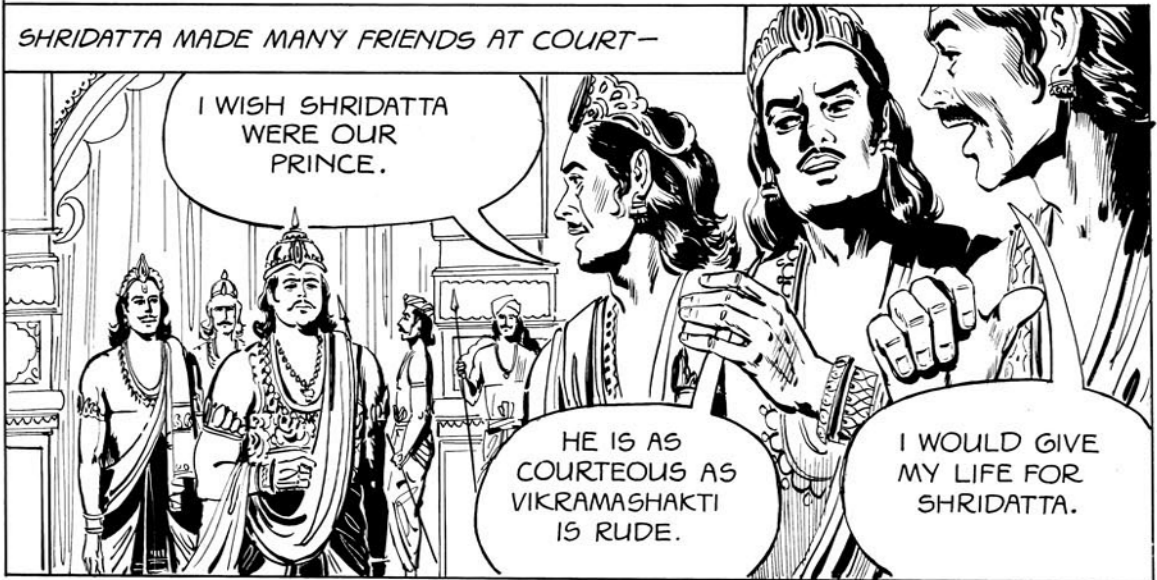
THE KING OF PATALIPUTRA HEARD OF SHRIDATTA. KALANEMI AND SHRIDATTA WERE INVITED TO THE COURT.



THE KING SOON BECAME VERY FOND OF SHRIDATTA.



SHRIDATTA MADE MANY FRIENDS AT COURT—

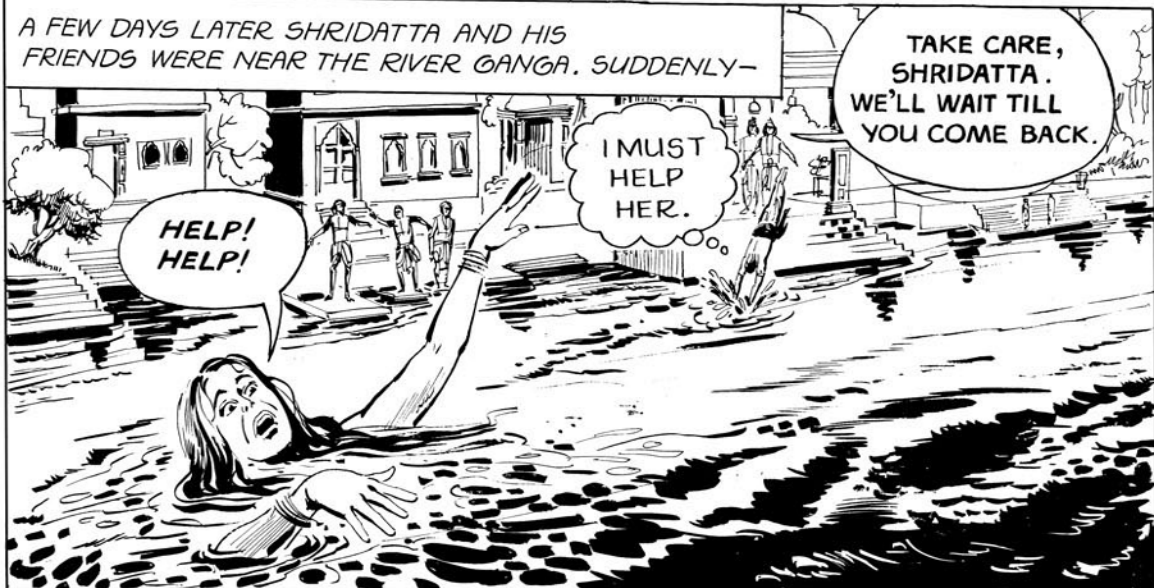


ALL THIS MADE VIKRAMASHAKTI JEALOUS OF SHRIDATTA.

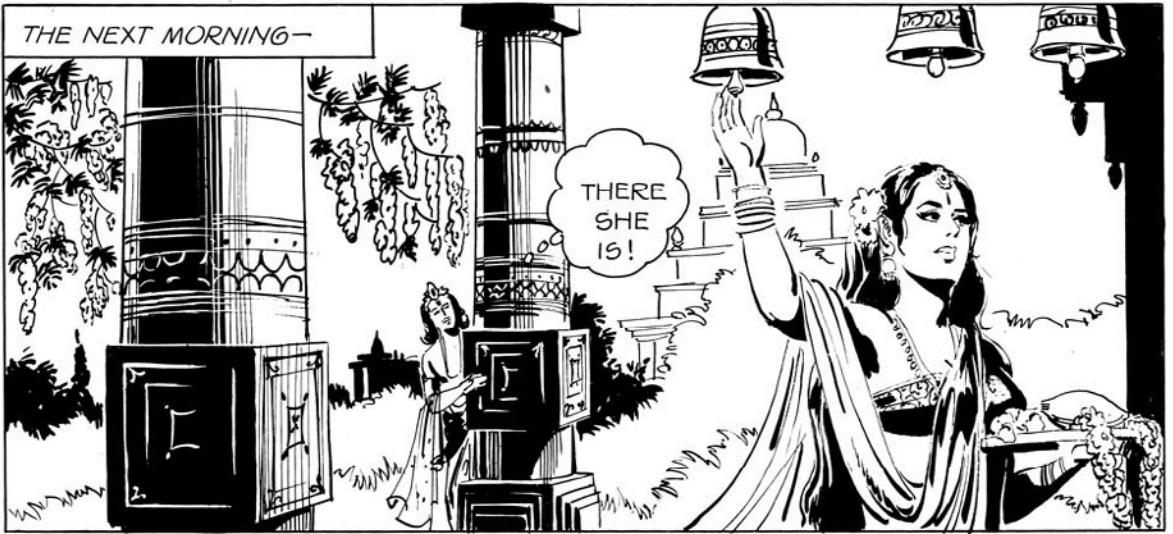
ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL GET EVEN WITH HIM.

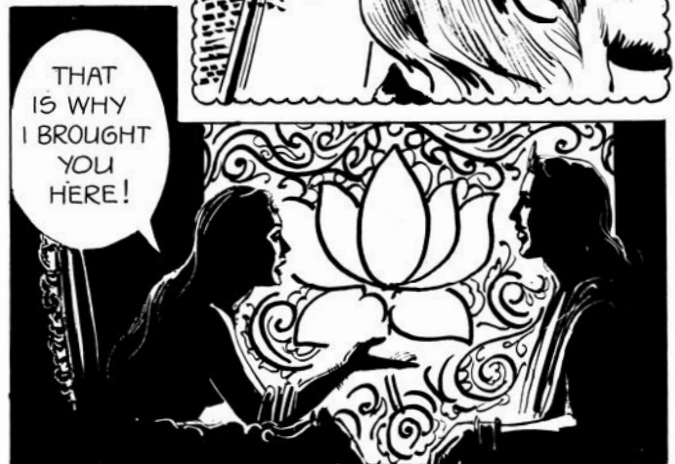
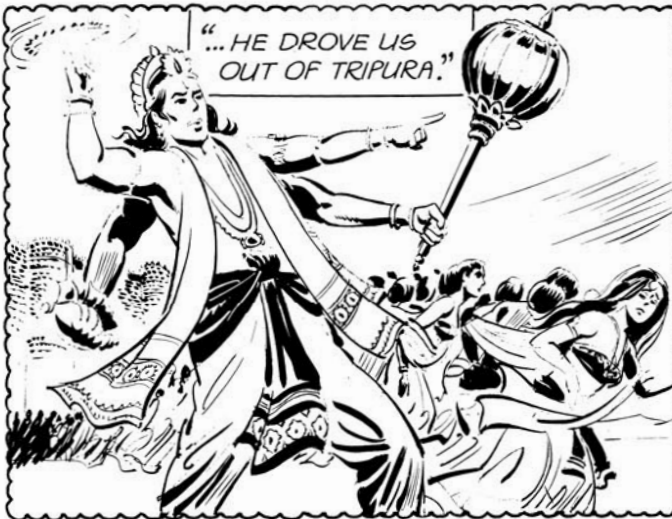


A FEW DAYS LATER SHRIDATTA AND HIS FRIENDS WERE NEAR THE RIVER GANGA. SUDDENLY—









THE VERY NEXT DAY SHRIDATTA
FOUGHT THE LION.



TO HIS SURPRISE THE LION TURNED
INTO A*YAKSHA.

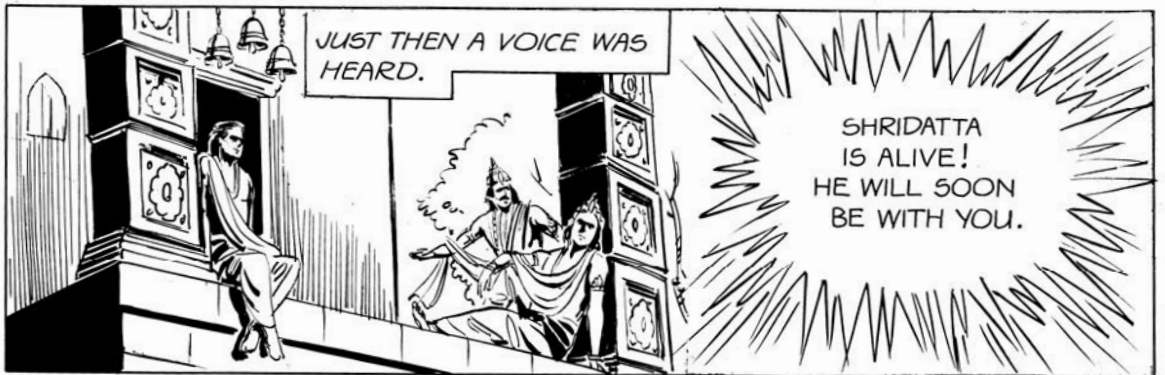
I AM GRATEFUL TO
YOU, SHRIDATTA.
YOU HAVE RELEASED
ME FROM A CURSE.



*YAKSHAS ARE SEMI-DIVINE BEINGS, OF WHOM KUBERA WAS THE LORD.

THEN IT WAS THE TURN OF THE ASURA PRINCESS TO EXPRESS HER GRATITUDE.





WHEN SHRIDATTA CAME OUT OF THE GANGA -

WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

SHH! COME QUIETLY INTO THE WOODS AND I'LL TELL YOU. IT'S A LONG STORY.



SHRIDATTA WAS HORRIFIED WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS.

I'LL AVENGE MY PARENTS WITH MRIGANKAKA, MY DIVINE SWORD.

LET'S FIRST GO TO UJJAIN WHERE THE OTHERS ARE WAITING.

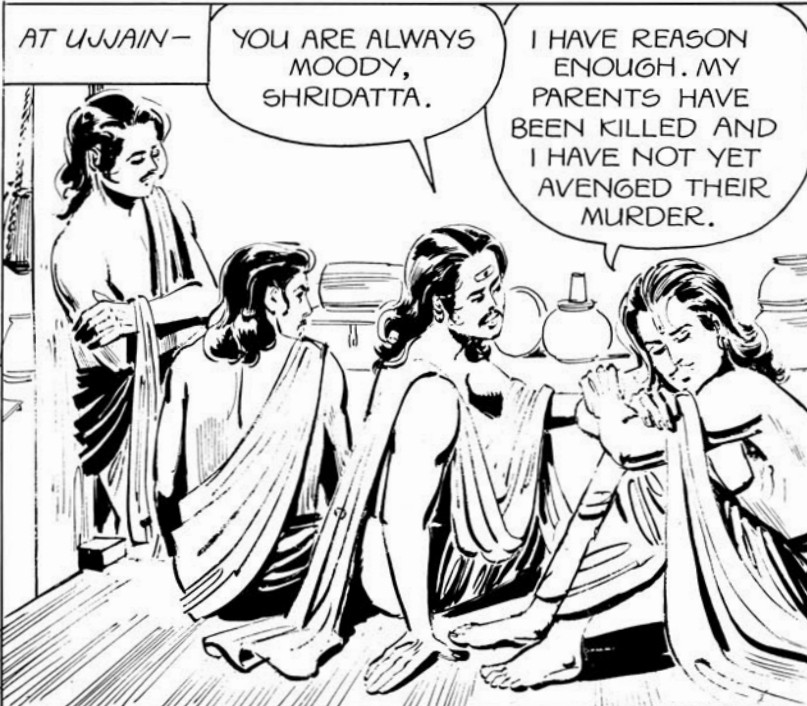


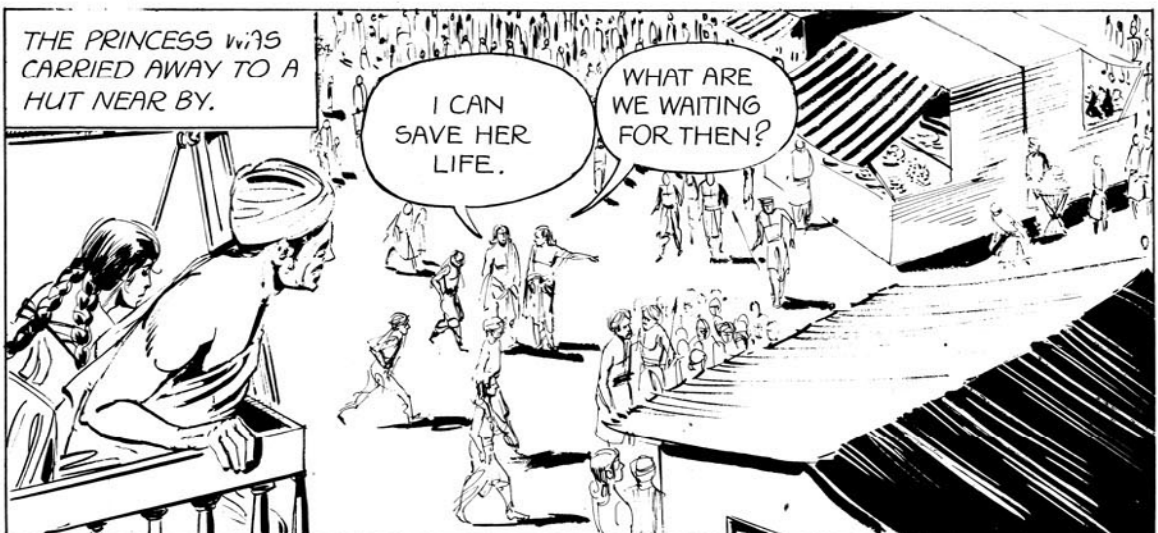
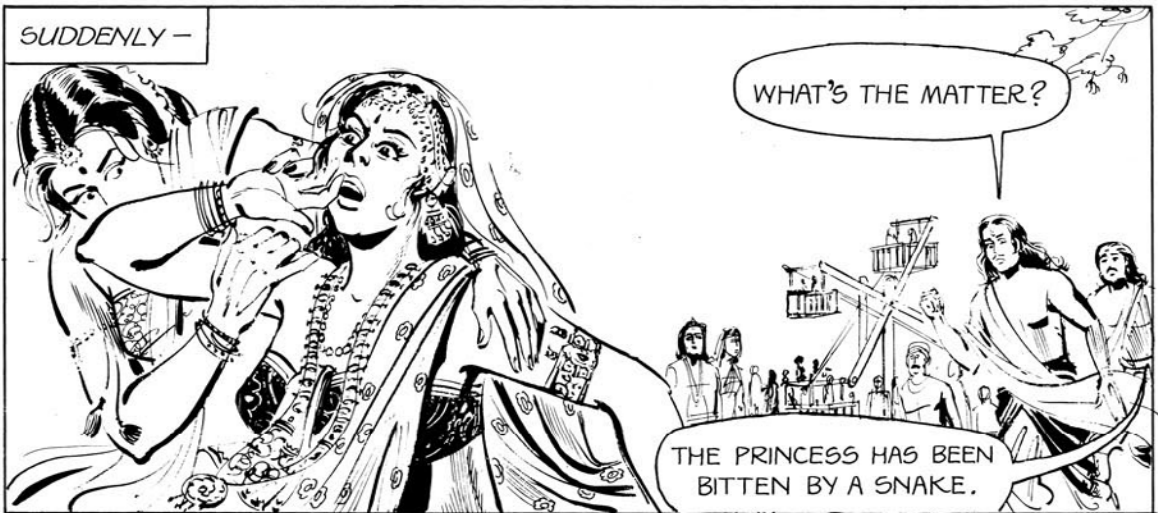
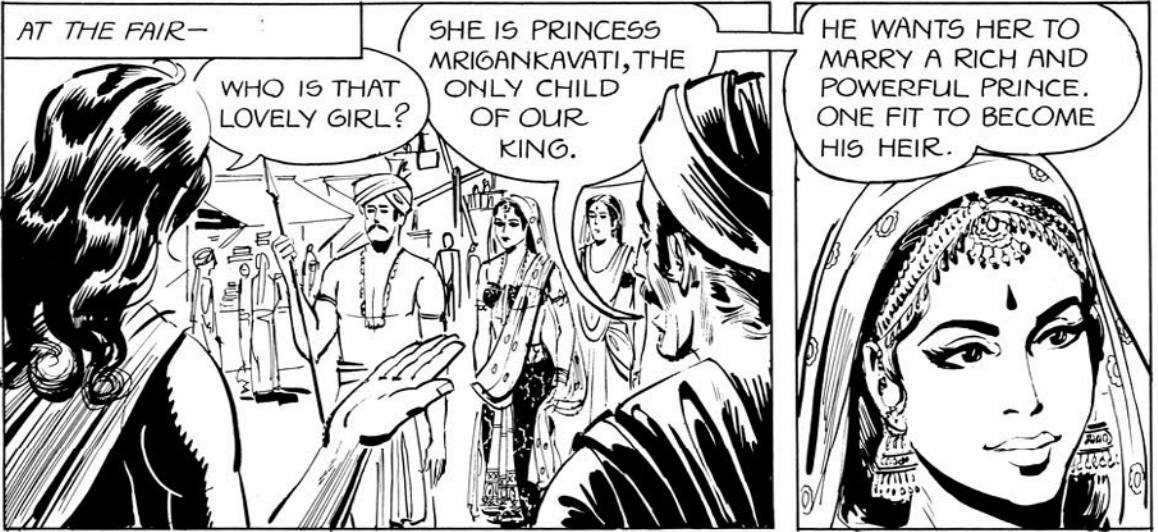
AT UJJAIN -

YOU ARE ALWAYS MOODY, SHRIDATTA.

I HAVE REASON ENOUGH. MY PARENTS HAVE BEEN KILLED AND I HAVE NOT YET AVENGED THEIR MURDER.

LET'S GO TO THE FAIR. IT WILL CHEER YOU UP.



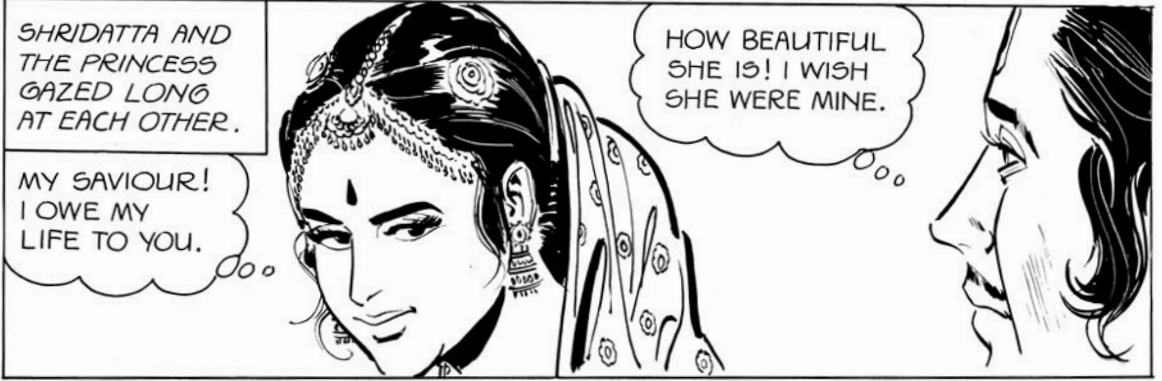


THEY HURRIED TO THE HUT WHERE THE PRINCESS WAS LAID OUT.



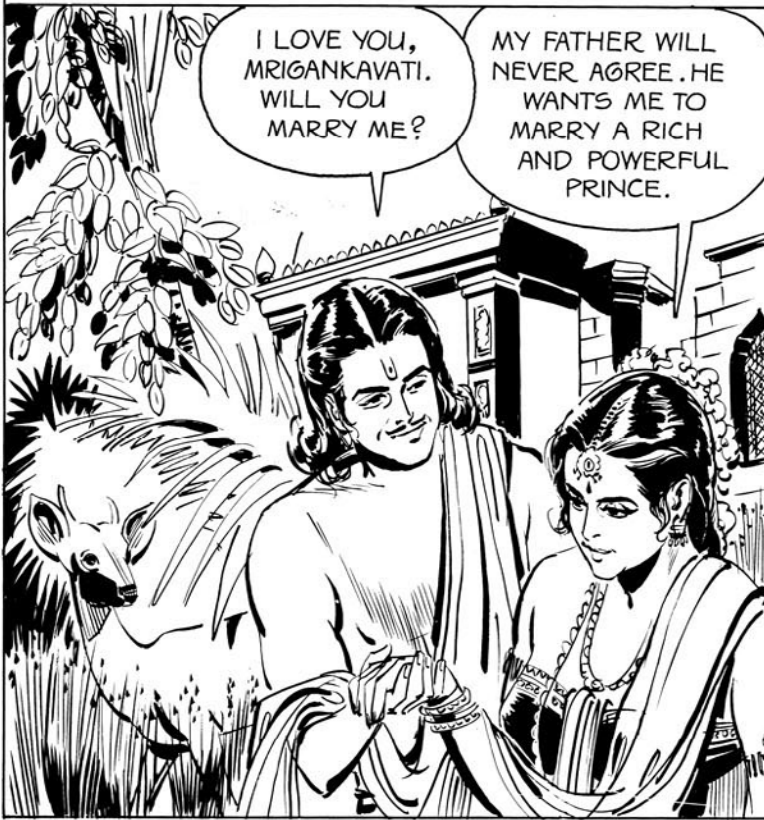
AS SHRIDATTA PUT THE RING ON HER FINGER THE PRINCESS SLOWLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.



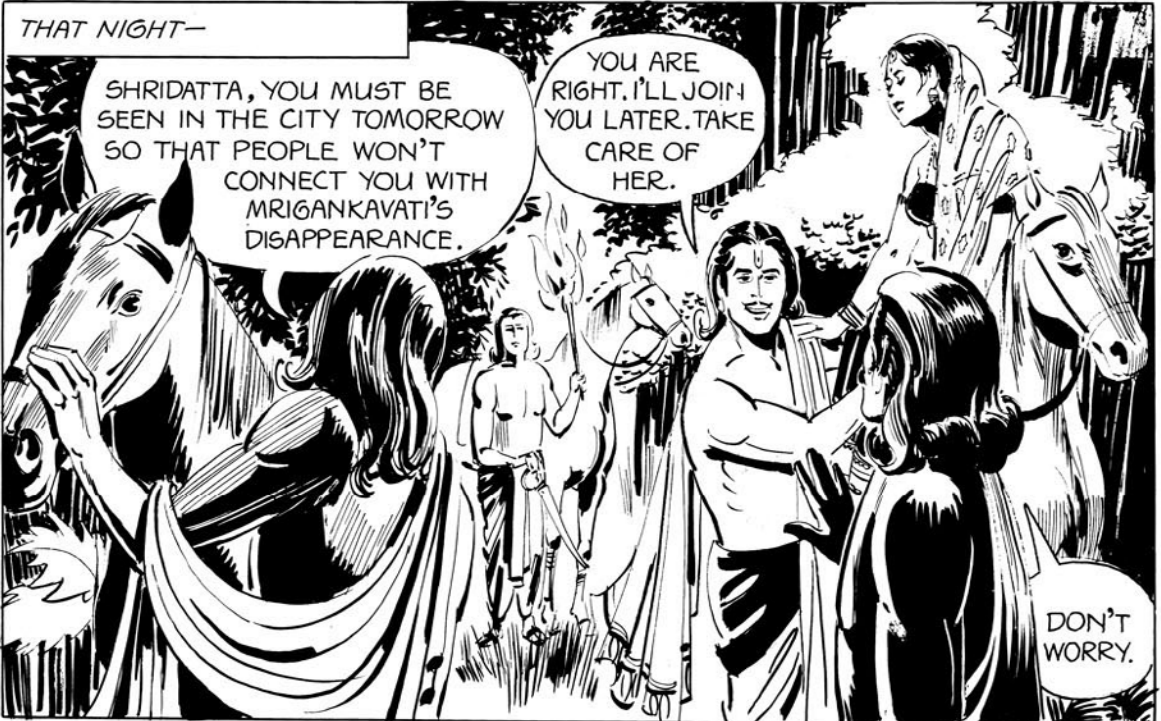




THAT EVENING WHEN THEY MET —



THAT NIGHT—



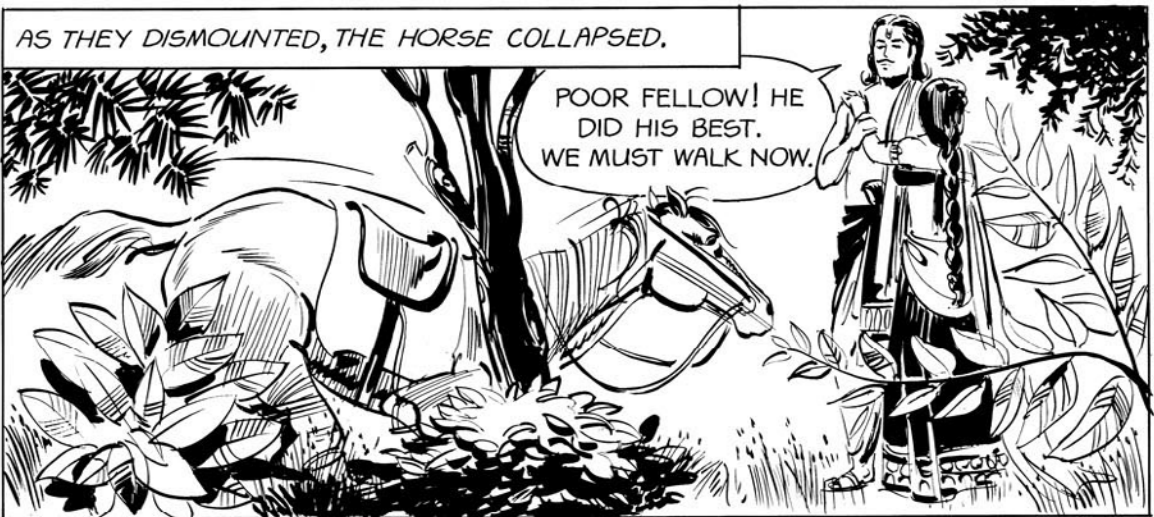
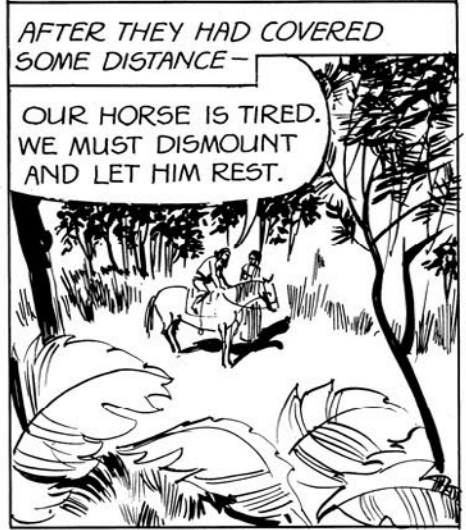
MRIGANKAVATI'S DISAPPEARANCE CREATED A STIR THE NEXT MORNING.





SHRIDATTA SOON CAUGHT UP WITH THE HORSEMEN.







SHRIDATTA AT LAST FOUND WATER. ON HIS WAY BACK—







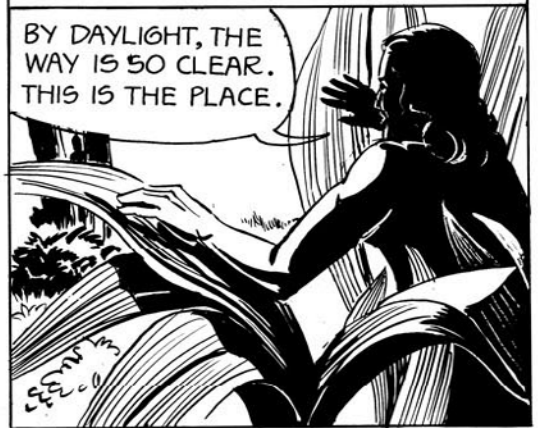




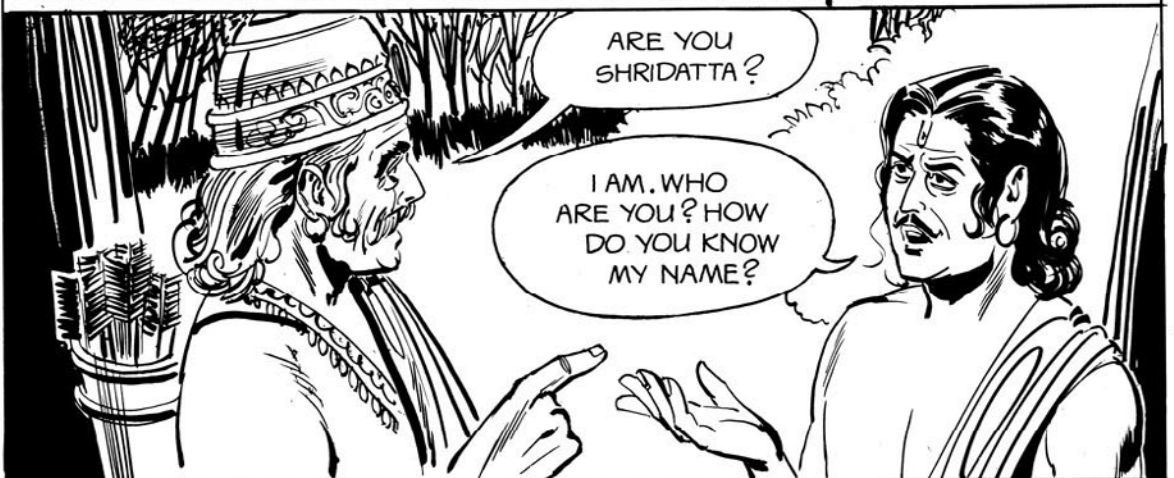
THE HUNTER LEFT MRIGANKAVATI IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE AND RETURNED TO THE FOREST.

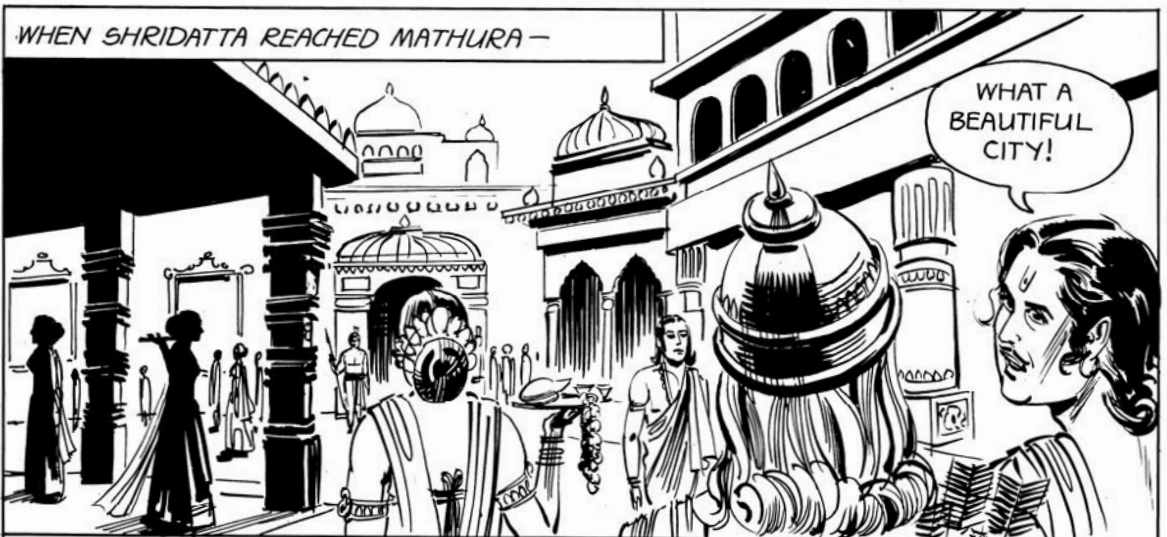
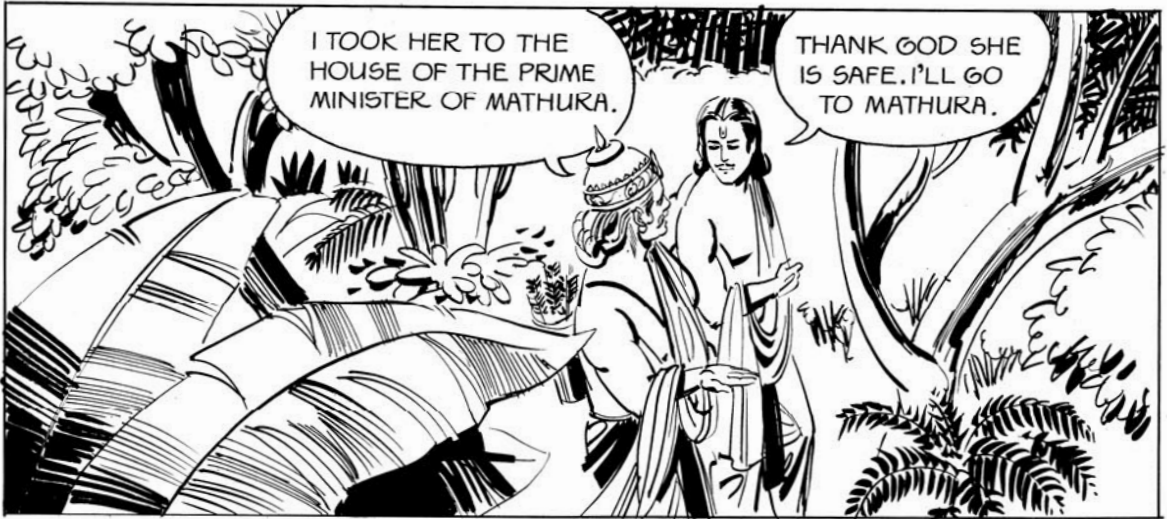
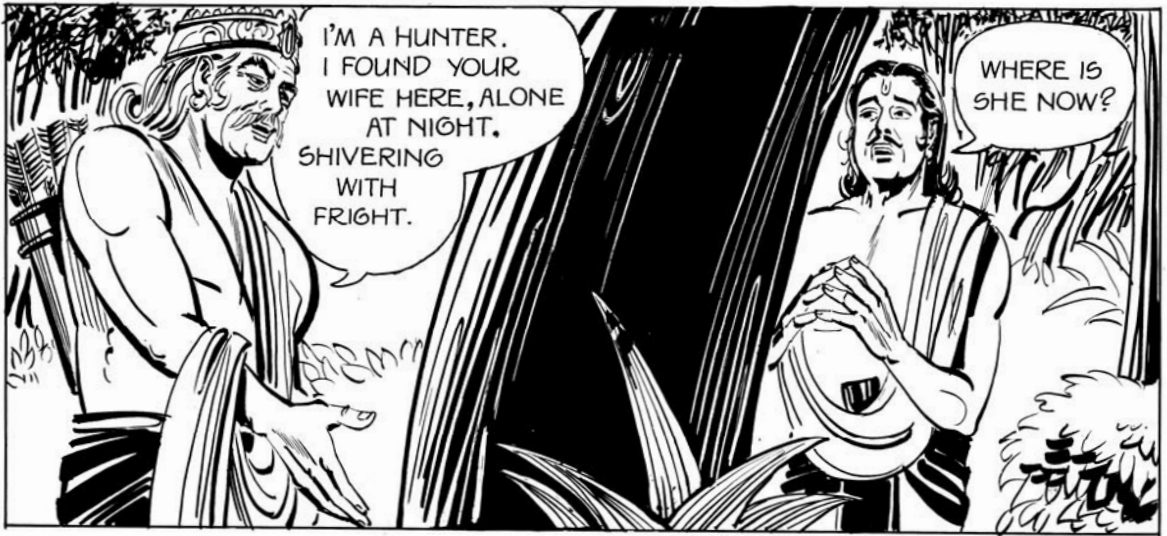


SHRIDATTA TOO, WAS ON HIS WAY BACK.



WHEN HE REACHED THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD LEFT MRIGANKAVATI—

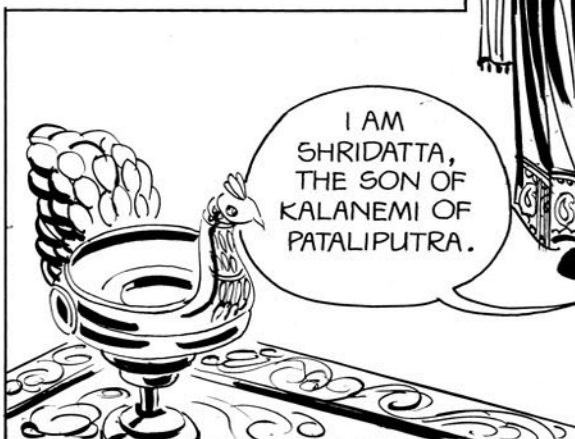
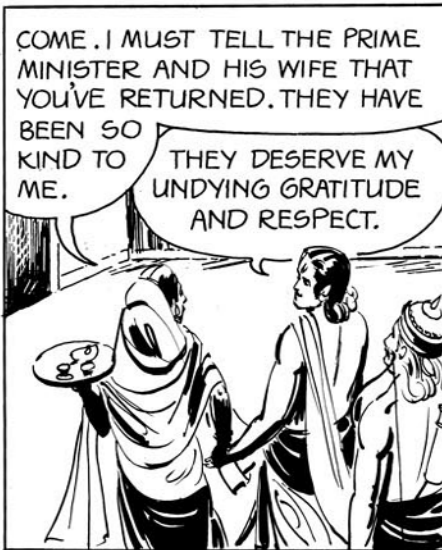




SUDDENLY —



WHEN THEY REACHED THE PRIME MINISTER'S
HOUSE —





SHRIDATTA TOLD HIS UNCLE THE WHOLE STORY. WHEN HE HAD FINISHED -



SHRIDATTA AND MRIGANKAVATI WERE MARRIED. A FEW DAYS LATER -



MRIGANKAVATI WENT WITH HER UNCLE AND AUNT TO UJJAIN.

I AM THE PRIME MINISTER OF MATHURA. MRIGANKAVATI IS MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

I AM SO RELIEVED TO SEE YOU. WHY DID YOU RUN AWAY?

FORGIVE ME, FATHER.

SHRIDATTA FOUND HIS FRIENDS AND BROUGHT THEM TO UJJAIN.

YOU MUST CHALLENGE VIKRAMASHAKTI.

WE'LL MAKE YOU THE KING OF PATALIPUTRA.

THE KING OF MATHURA WILL BE ON OUR SIDE. YOU CAN DEPEND ON THAT.

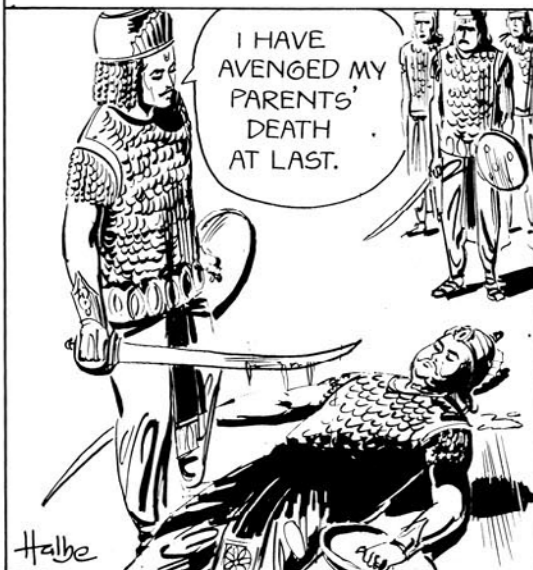
I'LL COLLECT AN ARMY AND WE WILL ATTACK PATALIPUTRA.

MRIGANKAVATI'S FATHER MADE A BOLD DECISION.

A TERRIBLE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT OUTSIDE PATALIPUTRA, IN WHICH...



...SHRIDATTA KILLED VIKRAMASHAKTI.



SHRIDATTA BECAME KING OF PATALIPUTRA AND REIGNED HAPPILY THERE WITH MRIGANKAVATI.

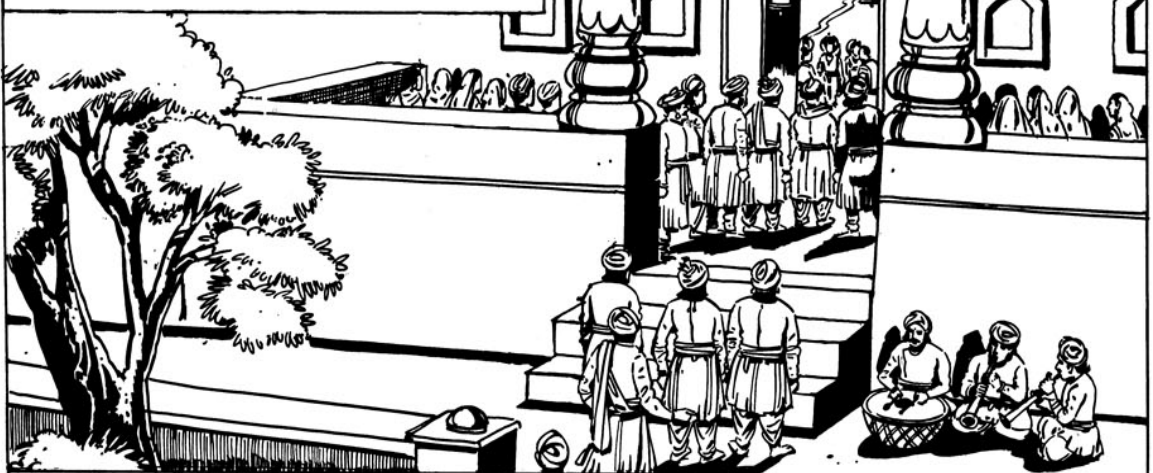


SAMARTH RAMDAS

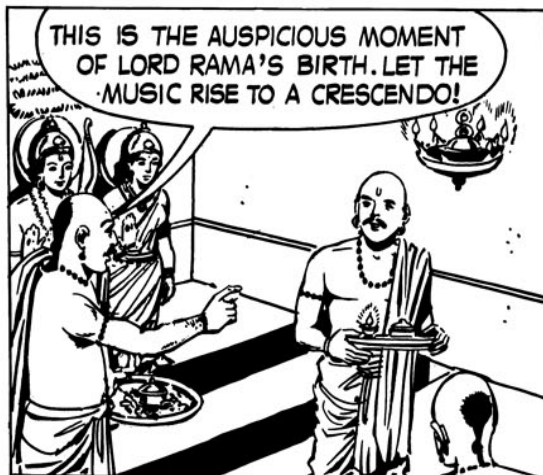
SHIVAJI'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE



SAMARTH RANDAS



IN THE SMALL TOWN OF JAMB IN MAHARASHTRA, THE RAMA NAVAMI FESTIVAL WAS BEING CELEBRATED.



AND SURYAJIPANT THOSAR HURRIED HOME TO SEE HIS SON.

WHEN SURYAJIPANT AND RANUBAI TOOK THEIR CHILD TO PAITHAN AND PLACED HIM AT THE FEET OF EKANATH, THE GREAT SAINT—



THE CHILD, WHO WAS NAMED NARAYAN, GREW UP TO BE A BRIGHT BOY.

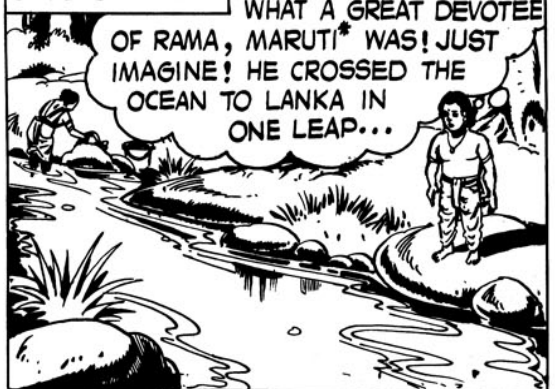
MOTHER, I SHARE MY BIRTHDAY WITH LORD RAMA, DON'T I?

YOU DO, MY CHILD. YOU MUST ALSO STRIVE TO BE LIKE HIM—NOBLE AND GOOD.



BUT IT WAS THE EXPLOITS OF HANUMAN THAT INITIALLY CAUGHT THE ENERGETIC CHILD'S FANCY.

WHAT A GREAT DEVOTEE OF RAMA, MARUTI* WAS! JUST IMAGINE! HE CROSSED THE OCEAN TO LANKA IN ONE LEAP...



...LIKE THIS!

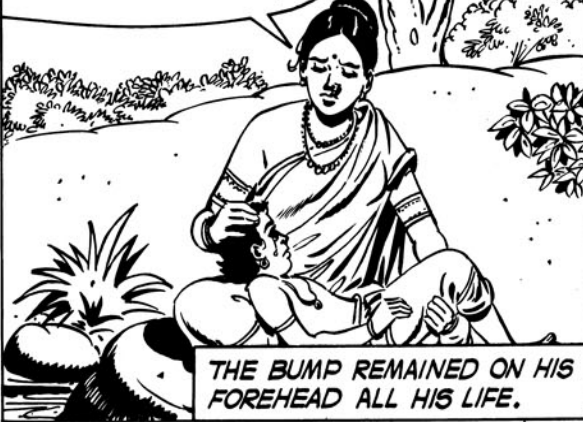


NARAYAN...



* ANOTHER NAME FOR HANUMAN

WHAT WERE YOU UP TO?
YOU POOR CHILD! WHAT A
BIG BUMP YOU HAVE
ON YOUR FOREHEAD!



THE BUMP REMAINED ON HIS
FOREHEAD ALL HIS LIFE.

BUT SUCH ACCIDENTS HARDLY DAMPENED
HIS SPIRITS.

MOTHER, MOTHER...
LIKE MARUTI, I TOO
CAN CLIMB TREES
THAT NEARLY TOUCH
THE SKY! I HAD
GONE INTO THE
JUNGLE TODAY.
I...

THE JUNGLE...
OF ALL PLACES!
AREN'T YOU
AFRAID OF WILD
ANIMALS? OR
EVIL SPIRITS?



EVIL SPIRITS! HUH! ONE
BLOW FROM ME AND THEY'LL
QUIT THE FOREST
FOREVER!



RANUBAI, FEAR WILL
NEVER STOP NARAYAN
FROM DOING WHAT HE
WISHES TO. HE DOESN'T
KNOW WHAT FEAR IS!



WHEN NARAYAN WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, SURYAJIPANT DIED. THEREAFTER NARAYAN'S ELDER BROTHER, GANGADHAR, TOOK CARE OF THE FAMILY. GANGADHAR WAS THE HEAD OF A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.

MOTHER, WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE COME TO GANGOBA DADA ?

HE IS A TEACHER AND NOVICES COME TO HIM TO LEARN ABOUT GOD.

HE TAKES THEM INTO THAT ROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR. WHAT DOES HE DO THERE ?

HE TEACHES THEM THE SACRED LORE AND MAKES THEM DEVOTEES OF GOD. IT'S CALLED INITIATION.

MOTHER, I WANT TO BE INITIATED.

INITIATED ? YOU ? WHY YOU ARE JUST A BABY !

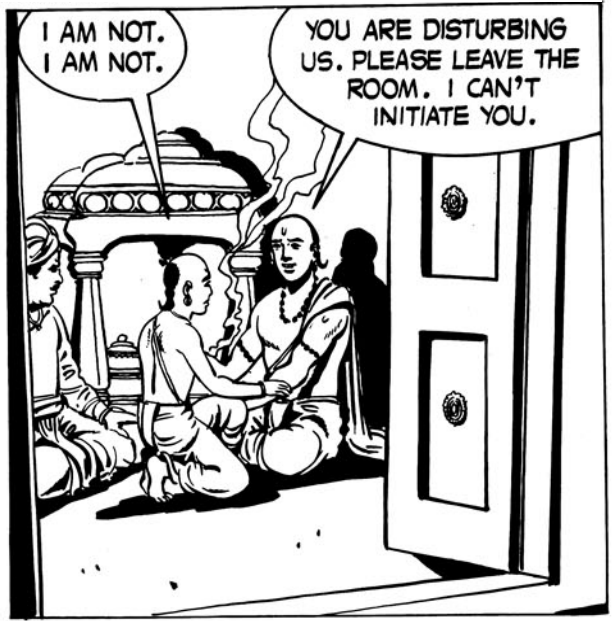
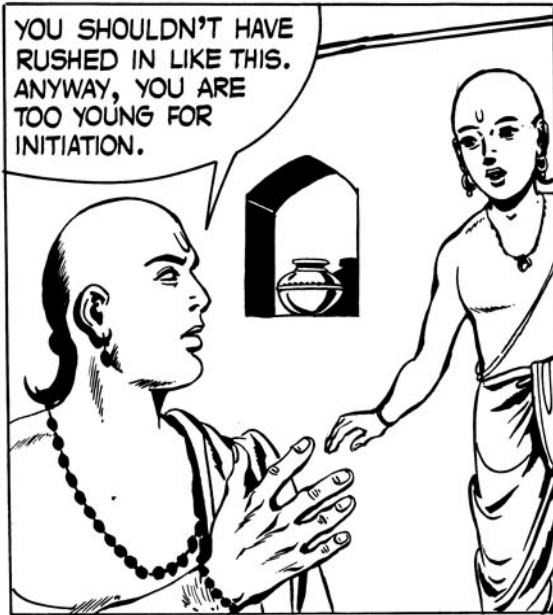
I AM NOT A BABY ! I AM EIGHT YEARS OLD ! I WILL BE INITIATED.

NARAYAN RUSHED INTO HIS BROTHER'S ROOM.

DADA, PLEASE INITIATE ME. TEACH ME THE SACRED MANTRA*

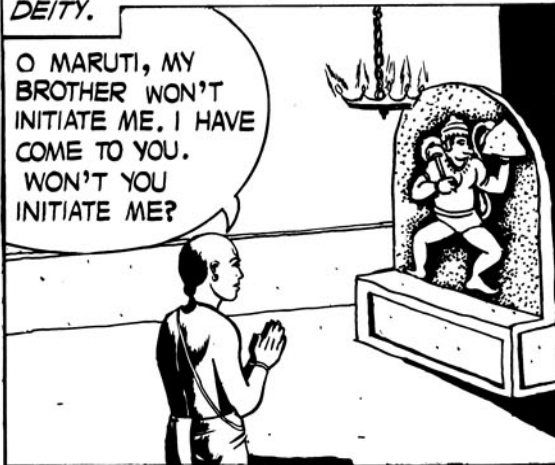
NARAYAN !

* CHANT

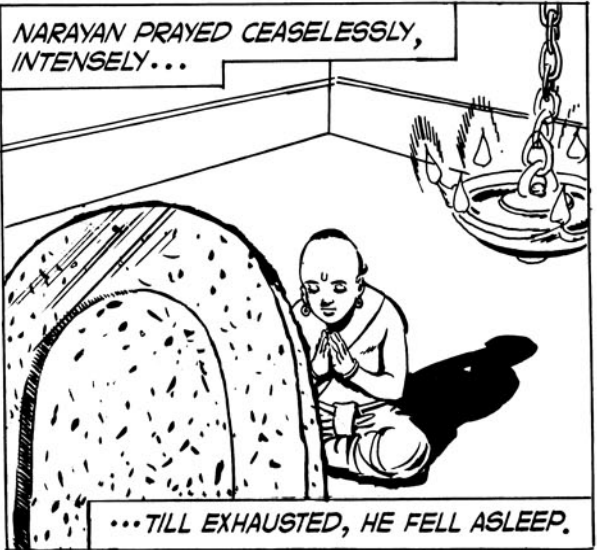


NARAYAN RAN TO THE HANUMAN TEMPLE NEAR BY AND PRAYED TO HIS FAVOURITE DEITY.

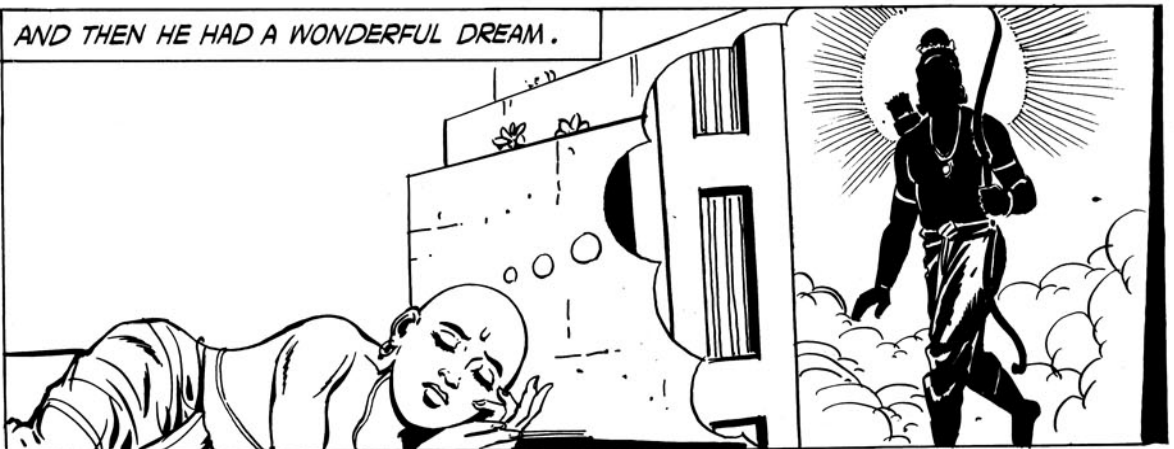
O MARUTI, MY BROTHER WON'T INITIATE ME. I HAVE COME TO YOU. WON'T YOU INITIATE ME?

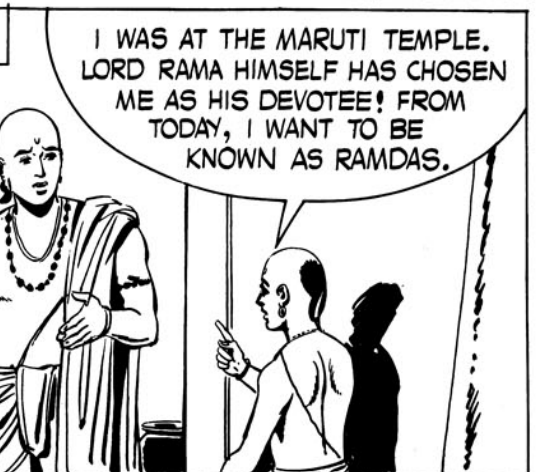
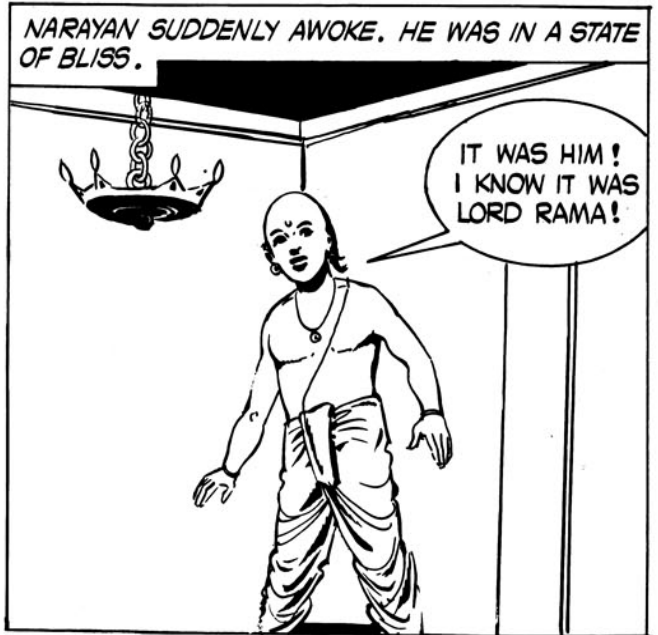
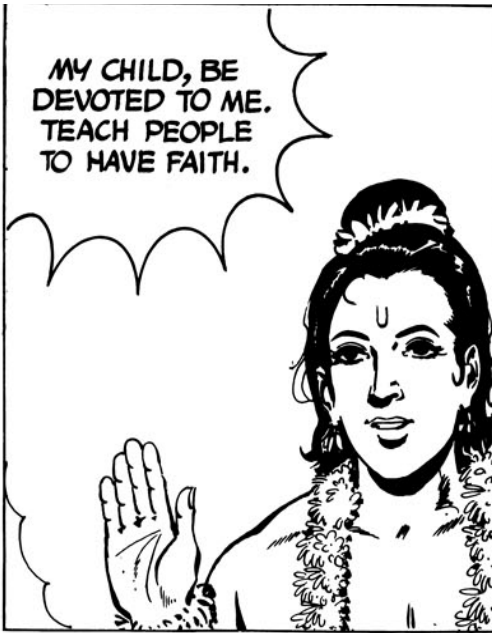


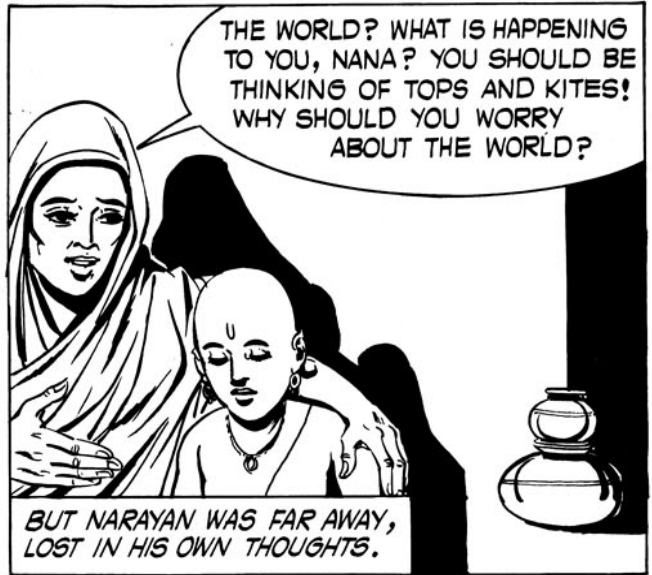
NARAYAN PRAYED CEASELESSLY, INTENSELY...



AND THEN HE HAD A WONDERFUL DREAM.





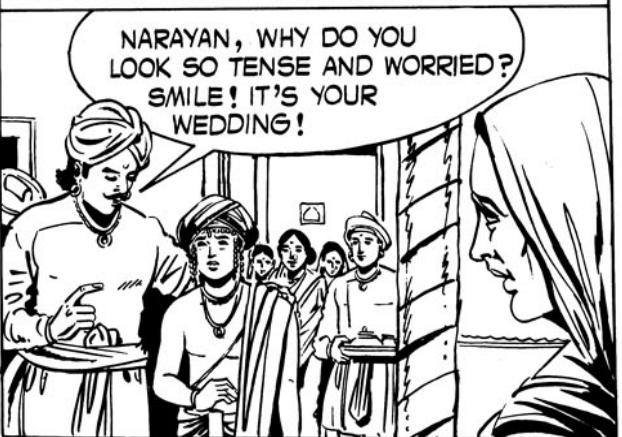


OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, RANUBAI HELPLESSLY WATCHED HER SON GROW FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM HER. AT LAST WHEN NARAYAN WAS TWELVE, SHE DECIDED THAT MARRIAGE WOULD BE THE BEST THING FOR HIM.

MY SON, I AM GROWING OLD. MARRY A GOOD GIRL AND MAKE ME HAPPY.



RANUBAI TOOK HIS SILENCE FOR CONSENT AND SOON THE FATEFUL DAY DAWNED.



NARAYAN REMAINED SILENT. ONCE THE INITIAL RITES WERE COMPLETED, THE PRIESTS BEGAN UTTERING THE FINAL CHANT.



* BE AWARE

NARAYAN SUDDENLY TURNED TO THE MAN STANDING BY HIS SIDE.



WHY ARE THEY SAYING 'SAVADHAN'? WHY DO THEY ASK ME TO BE AWARE?

BECAUSE, YOUNG MAN, YOU WILL NOW ASSUME NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. AS A HOUSEHOLDER YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR WIFE AND REAR YOUR CHILDREN.

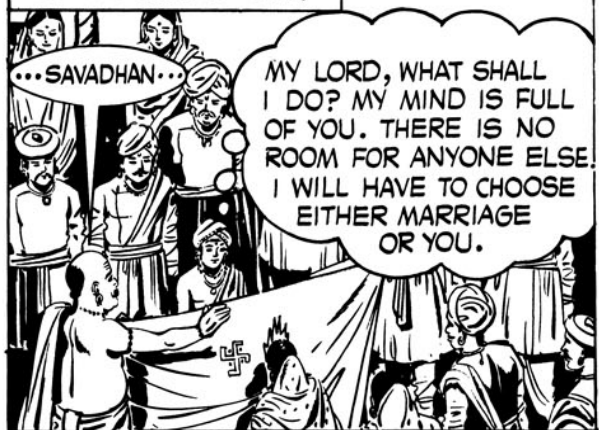


NARAYAN'S THOUGHTS RACED AHEAD.



SAVADHAN — BEWARE! IF... IF... AFTER MARRIAGE, I AM STILL LOST IN GOD, I SHALL FAIL IN MY DUTIES AS A HOUSEHOLDER.

THE PRIESTS CHANTED THE CRUCIAL WORD FOR THE SECOND TIME.



...SAVADHAN...

MY LORD, WHAT SHALL I DO? MY MIND IS FULL OF YOU. THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ANYONE ELSE. I WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE EITHER MARRIAGE OR YOU.

WHEN THE WORD WAS BEING CHANTED FOR THE THIRD AND LAST TIME —



... SAVA ...

I CHOOSE YOU MY LORD...

THE NEXT MOMENT —



WITHOUT STOPPING HE RAN TOWARDS THE RIVER GODAVARI...



... SWAM ACROSS ...

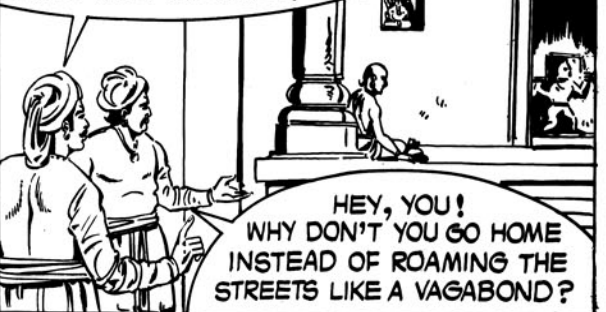


... AND AT A LONELY RIVERSIDE CAVE IN TAKALI, NEAR NASIK, BEGAN HIS LIFE AS AN ASCETIC.



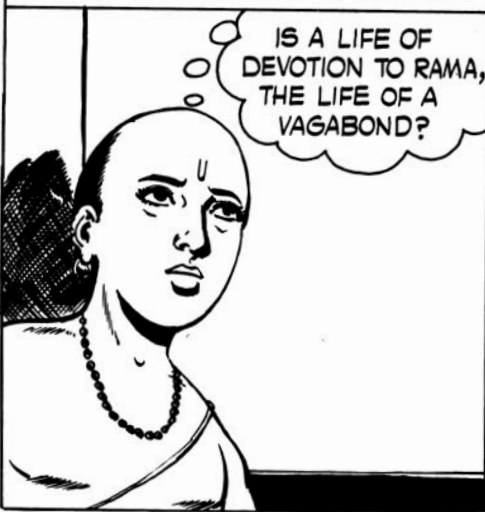
BUT PEOPLE LOOKED UPON HIM SCEPTICALLY.

LOOK AT THAT CHILD DRESSED UP LIKE A SADHU. HE SHOULD BE GOING TO SCHOOL. HE MUST HAVE RUN AWAY FROM HOME AFTER SOME SILLY QUARREL!



HEY, YOU! WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME INSTEAD OF ROAMING THE STREETS LIKE A VAGABOND?

THESE ACCUSATIONS HURT RAMDAS.

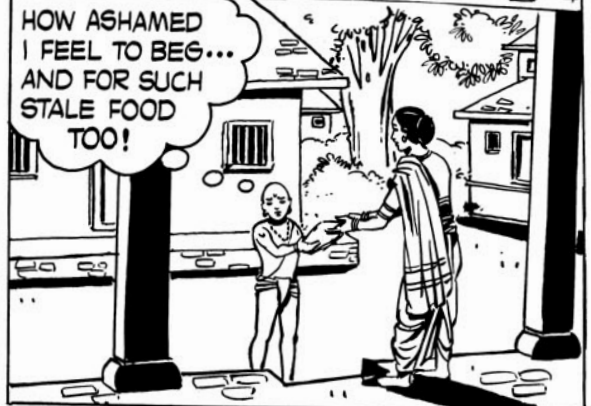


THOUGHTS OF HOME TROUBLED THE YOUNG BOY.



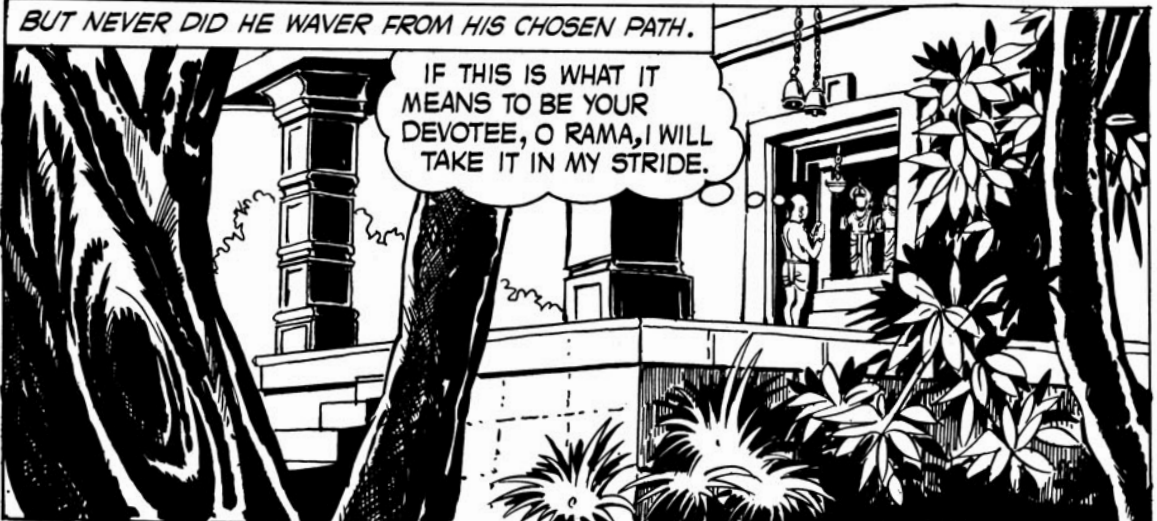
HE HAD TO GET USED TO THE IDEA OF BEGGING FOR HIS FOOD, AND EATING WHAT WAS GIVEN TO HIM.

HOW ASHAMED I FEEL TO BEG... AND FOR SUCH STALE FOOD TOO!

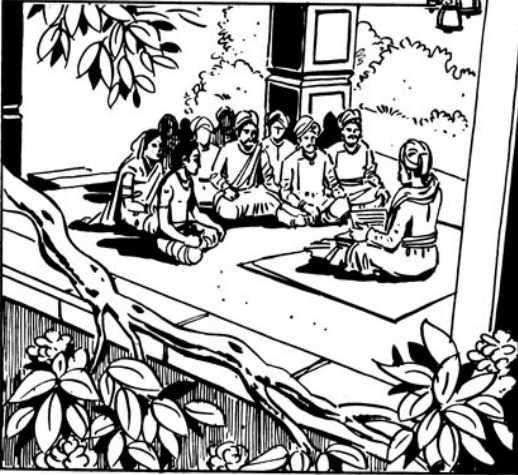


BUT NEVER DID HE WAVER FROM HIS CHOSEN PATH.

IF THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE YOUR DEVOTEE, O RAMA, I WILL TAKE IT IN MY STRIDE.



WITH SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION, HE USED EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE HIMSELF. HE LISTENED TO THE DISCOURSES OF THE PANDITS.



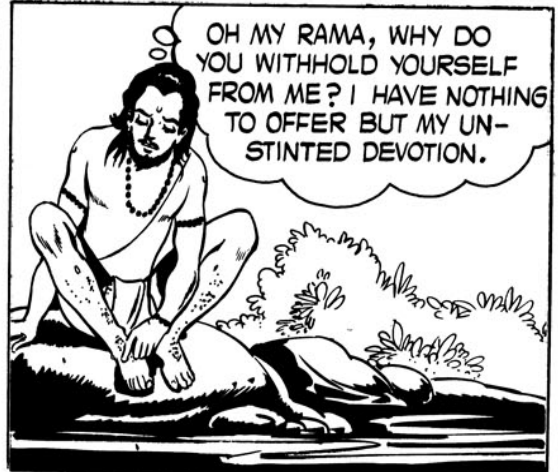
HE PORED OVER THE ANCIENT TEXTS.



FOR SIX HOURS EVERY DAY, HE STOOD IN WAIST-DEEP WATER, PRAYING TO THE SUN.

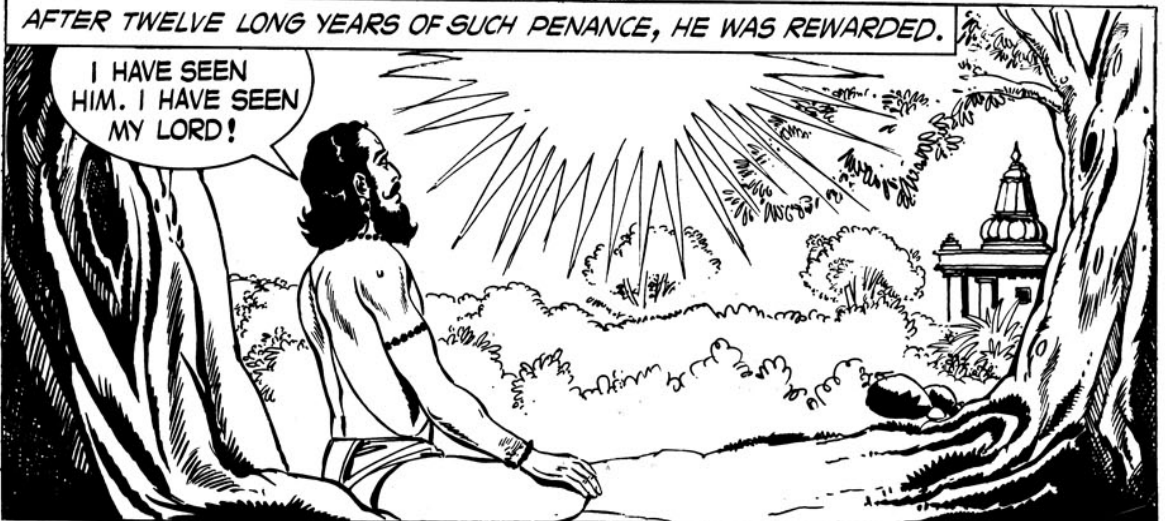


OH MY RAMA, WHY DO YOU WITHHOLD YOURSELF FROM ME? I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER BUT MY UNSTINTED DEVOTION.



AFTER TWELVE LONG YEARS OF SUCH PENANCE, HE WAS REWARDED.

I HAVE SEEN HIM. I HAVE SEEN MY LORD!



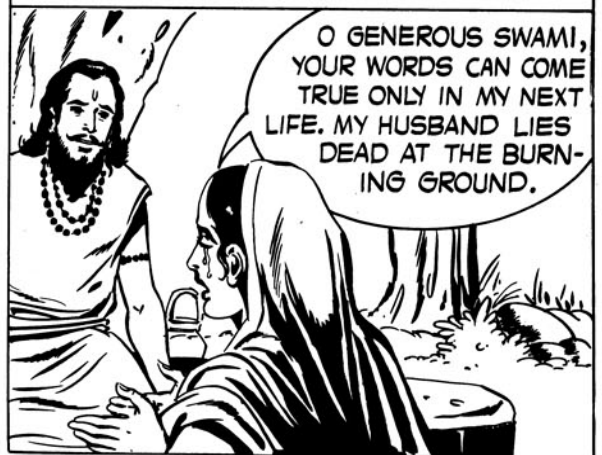
NO LONGER WAS RAMDAS THE UNSURE, AWKWARD BOY. A NEW CONFIDENCE MADE HIM A SEER AND A POET. PEOPLE NOW FLOCKED TO SEE AND HEAR HIM.



ONE DAY, A YOUNG WOMAN APPROACHED HIM AND RAMDAS BLESSED HER.



AT THIS, THE WOMAN BURST INTO TEARS.

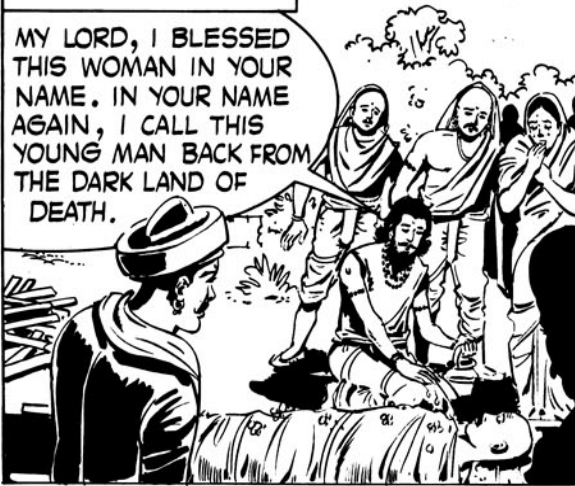


FOR A MOMENT, RAMDAS WAS TAKEN ABACK.



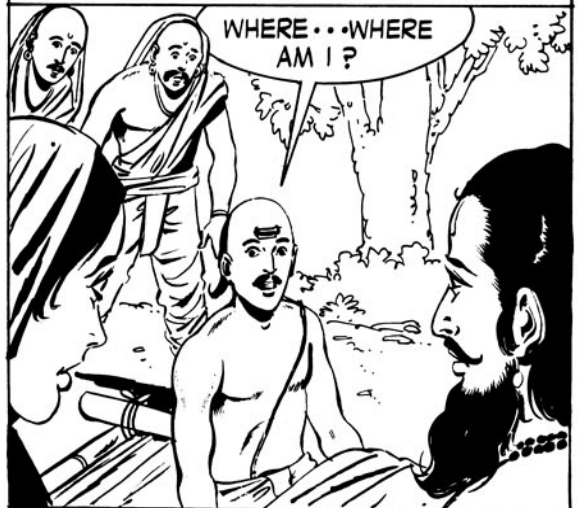
AT THE BURNING GHAT, TAKING THE NAME OF RAMA, RAMDAS SPRINKLED HOLY WATER ON THE DEAD BODY.

MY LORD, I BLESSED THIS WOMAN IN YOUR NAME. IN YOUR NAME AGAIN, I CALL THIS YOUNG MAN BACK FROM THE DARK LAND OF DEATH.



TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF ALL AROUND, GIRIDHARPANT, THE DEAD MAN, SAT UP.

WHERE...WHERE AM I?



OVERJOYED, THE COUPLE BOWED TO RAMDAS!

...SWAMIJI, OUR FIRST SON SHALL BE LAID AT YOUR FEET AS YOUR DISCIPLE.

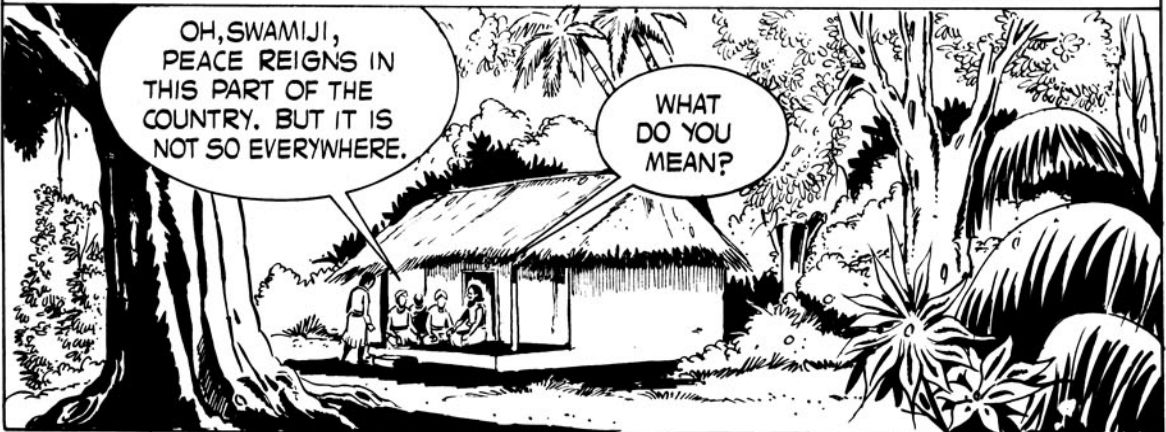
GLORY TO RAMA, RAGHUVIR SAMARTH.*



RAMDAS' FAME SPREAD. PEOPLE CAME TO SEE HIM AND RECEIVE HIS BLESSINGS. THEY ALSO BROUGHT HIM NEWS OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN OTHER REGIONS.

OH, SWAMIJI, PEACE REIGNS IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY. BUT IT IS NOT SO EVERYWHERE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

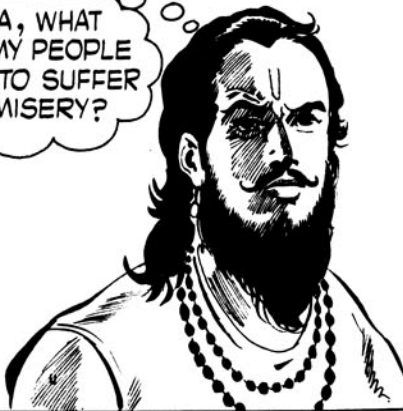


* THE CANNIPOTENT

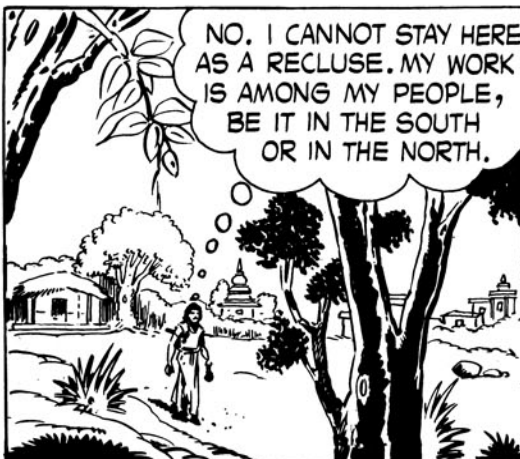


THESE STORIES OF SUFFERING WERE DISTURBING.

O RAMA, WHAT HAVE MY PEOPLE DONE TO SUFFER SUCH MISERY?

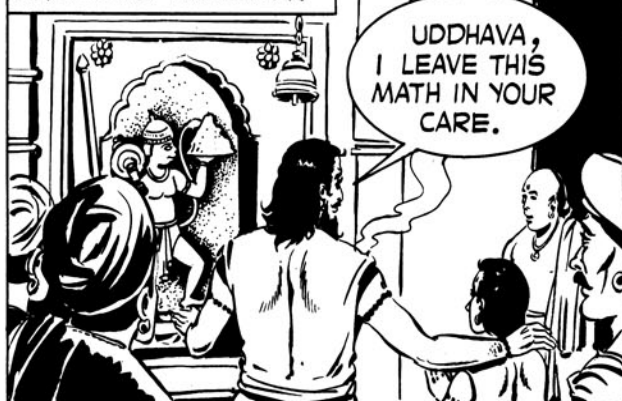


THE SPARK OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER ENLIVENED HIS MIND. YET —



AND RAMDAS BEGAN HIS WORK BY ESTABLISHING A STRING OF MATHS.*

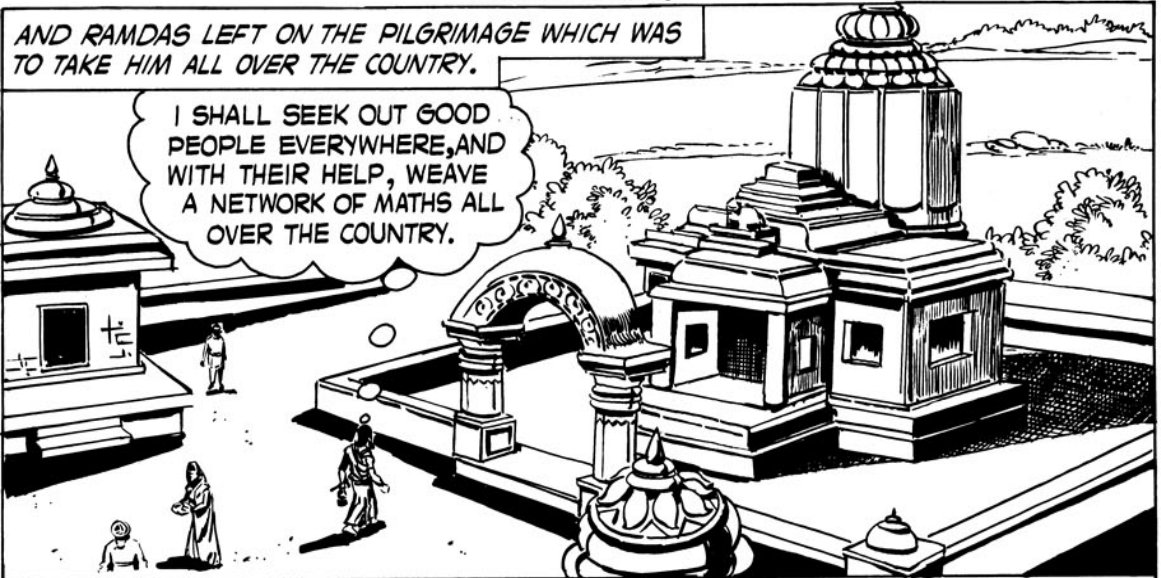
THE FIRST WAS AT TAKALI WHERE, WITH THE HELP OF HIS FIRST DISCIPLE, UDDHAVA, THE ELDEST SON OF GIRIDHARPANT, HE INSTALLED AN IDOL OF HANUMAN.



* RELIGIOUS MONASTERIES

AND RAMDAS LEFT ON THE PILGRIMAGE WHICH WAS TO TAKE HIM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

I SHALL SEEK OUT GOOD PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, AND WITH THEIR HELP, WEAVE A NETWORK OF MATHS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.



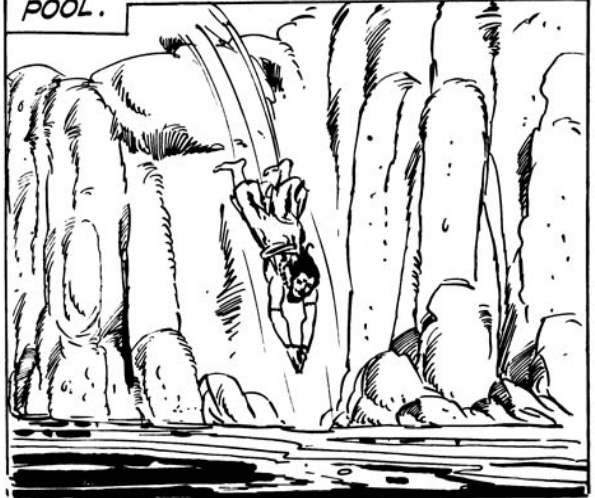
HE VISITED KASHI, AYODHYA, MATHURA AND DWARAKA WHERE HE ESTABLISHED HANUMAN TEMPLES AND MATHS HEADED BY HIS CHOSEN DISCIPLES.

HE THEN SET OUT FOR HOLY BADRI-KEDAR IN THE HIMALAYAS. ON HIS WAY THERE, HE WAS OVERCOME BY A SUDDEN REVULSION FOR HIS MORTAL BODY.

WHEN I HAVE ALREADY REALISED GOD, WHY SHOULD I BEAR THE BURDEN OF THIS MORTAL FRAME?



AND RAMDAS THREW HIMSELF INTO AN ICY POOL.



BUT SAVED BY THE HAND OF GOD, HE LAY UNCONSCIOUS ON THE EDGE OF THE POOL.



WHEN HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS —

YOUR MISSION REMAINS UNFULFILLED. ONCE IT IS COMPLETED, I SHALL CALL YOU TO ME.



RAMDAS HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE VOICE WAS HANUMAN'S.

O HANUMAN, I AM BUT YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT. YOUR WILL SHALL BE DONE.



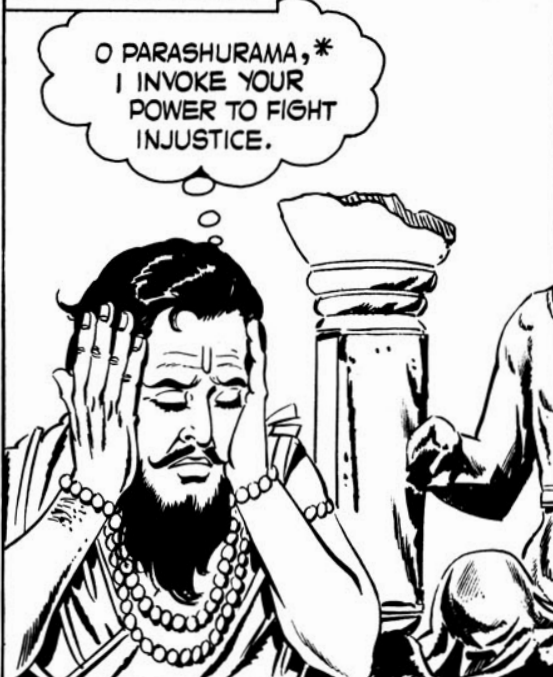
FROM THE HIMALAYAS, HE CAME DOWN SOUTH AND REACHED HAMPI — ONCE THE PROUD CAPITAL OF THE VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE, NOW IN RUINS. THE SIGHT FILLED HIM WITH SADNESS.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS ONCE THE SITE OF A GLORIOUS CITY.



FROM HAMPI, A DEEPLY AGITATED RAMDAS TRAVELLED WESTWARDS AND REACHED CHIPLUN.

O PARASHURAMA,* I INVOKE YOUR POWER TO FIGHT INJUSTICE.



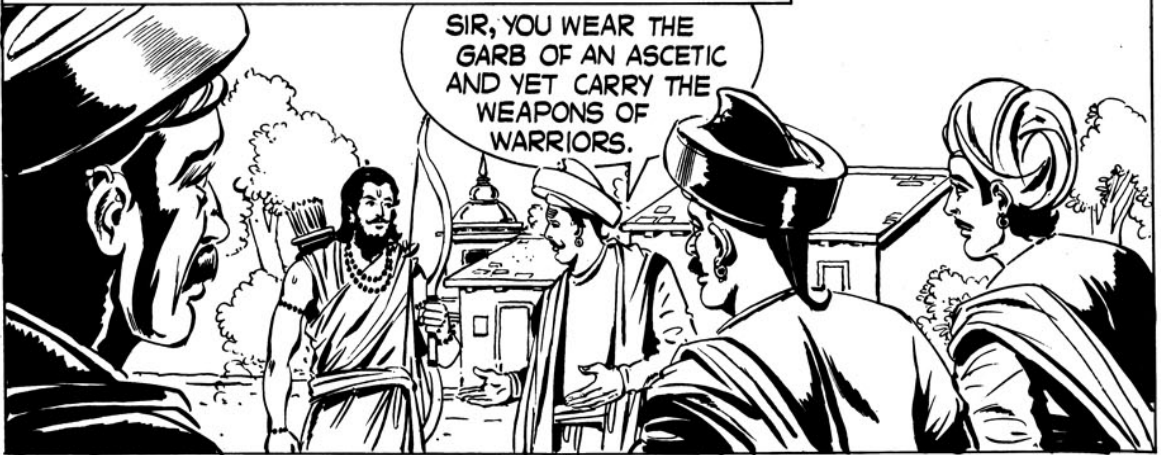
LATER, AT THE TEMPLE IN PANDHARPUR —

O VITHOBA, YOU ARE NONE OTHER THAN RAMA. WHERE IS YOUR BOW? WHERE ARE YOUR ARROWS? I WILL TAKE THEM UP WHEREVER YOU MIGHT HAVE DISCARDED THEM.



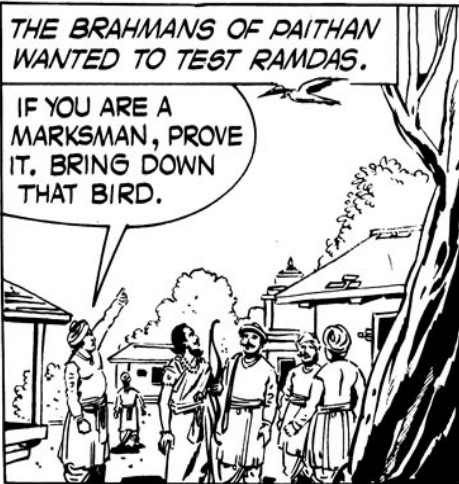
* AN AVATAR OF VISHNU

RAMDAS HAD DECIDED UPON ACTION AND LATER, WHEN HE REACHED PAITHAN, THE PEOPLE THERE WERE AMAZED TO FIND THIS ASCETIC CARRYING A BOW AND ARROWS.



THE BRAHMAN OF PAITHAN WANTED TO TEST RAMDAS.

IF YOU ARE A MARKSMAN, PROVE IT. BRING DOWN THAT BIRD.



RAMDAS TOOK AIM AND HIS ARROW BROUGHT DOWN THE BIRD.



THE BRAHMAN WERE SHOCKED.

OH, NO! SIR, HOW COULD YOU! YOU HAVE SINNED IN KILLING THIS INNOCENT BIRD. YOU MUST ATONE FOR IT.



RAMDAS PERFORMED THE RITES OF ATONEMENT AS LAID DOWN BY THE BRAHMAN.



THEN HE TURNED TO THEM .

YOU SAY I AM NOW FREE FROM SIN. BUT TRUE ATONEMENT LIES ONLY IN RESTORING LIFE TO THIS BIRD.



RAMDAS GENTLY PICKED UP THE LIMP BIRD.

RAMA, YOUR DEVOTEE BEGS YOU TO WASH HIM CLEAR OF HIS SIN. LET THE BIRD COME ALIVE AGAIN.



THE BIRD SPRANG TO LIFE...



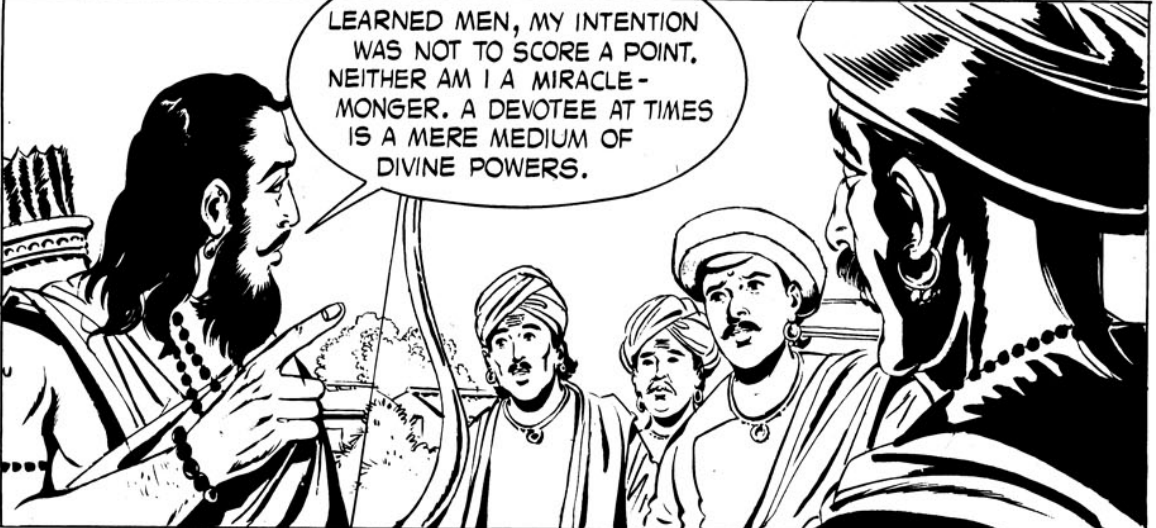
...SPREAD ITS WINGS AND SOARED AWAY TO FREEDOM.

MIRACULOUS!

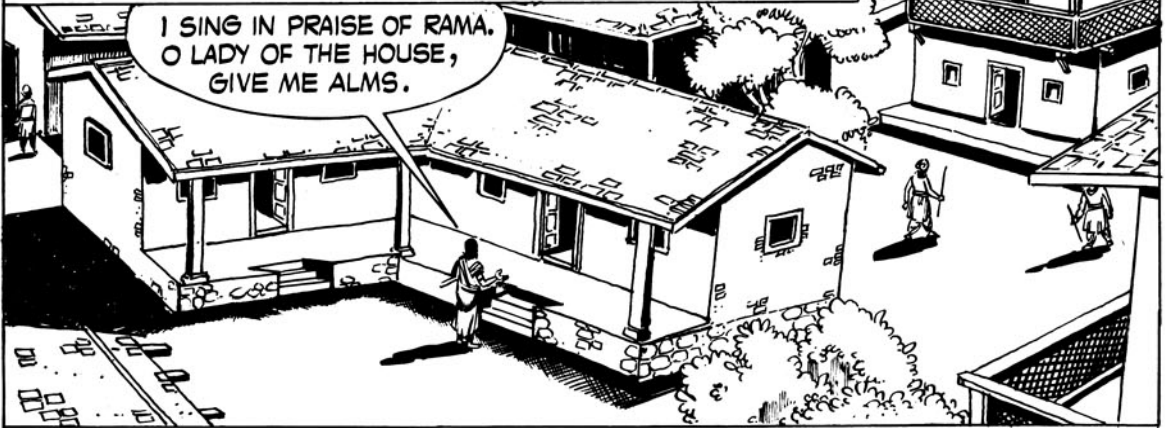
GREAT ONE, YOU ARE A SAMARTH. TRULY A SAMARTH!



LEARNED MEN, MY INTENTION WAS NOT TO SCORE A POINT. NEITHER AM I A MIRACLEMONGER. A DEVOTEE AT TIMES IS A MERE MEDIUM OF DIVINE POWERS.



RAMDAS' WANDERING PILGRIMAGE LED HIM TO JAMB, HIS NATIVE VILLAGE, WHICH HE HAD LEFT TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO. HE WENT TO HIS HOUSE AND STOOD AT THE FAMILIAR DOORSTEP.



GANGADHAR'S WIFE DID NOT RECOGNISE RAMDAS.

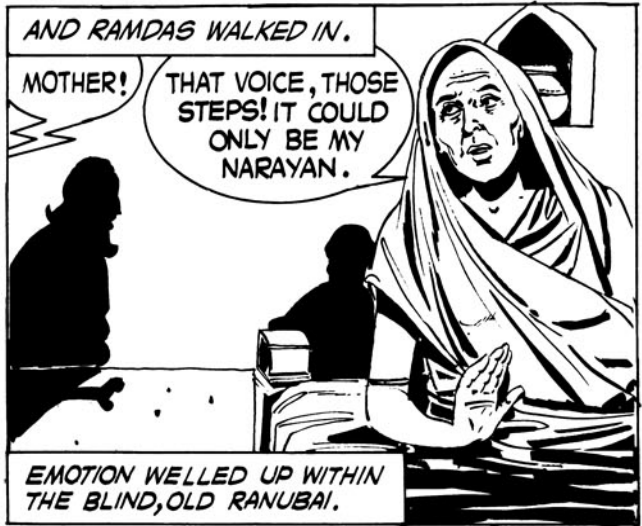
SISTER, DON'T YOU KNOW ME?



AND RAMDAS WALKED IN.

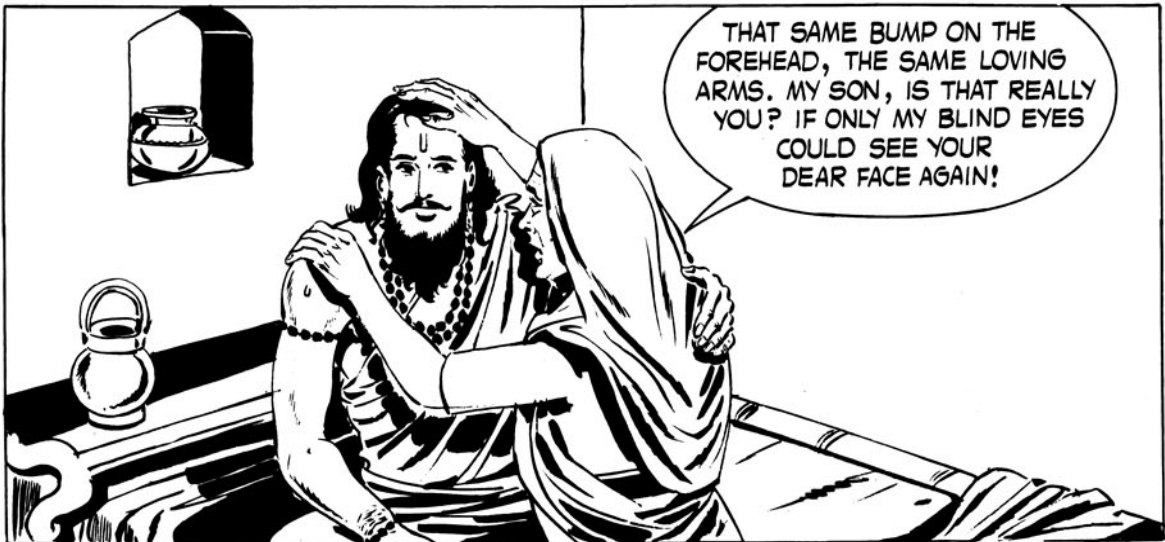
MOTHER!

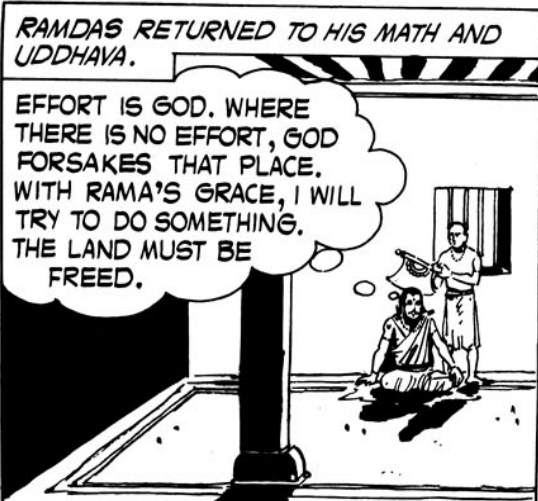
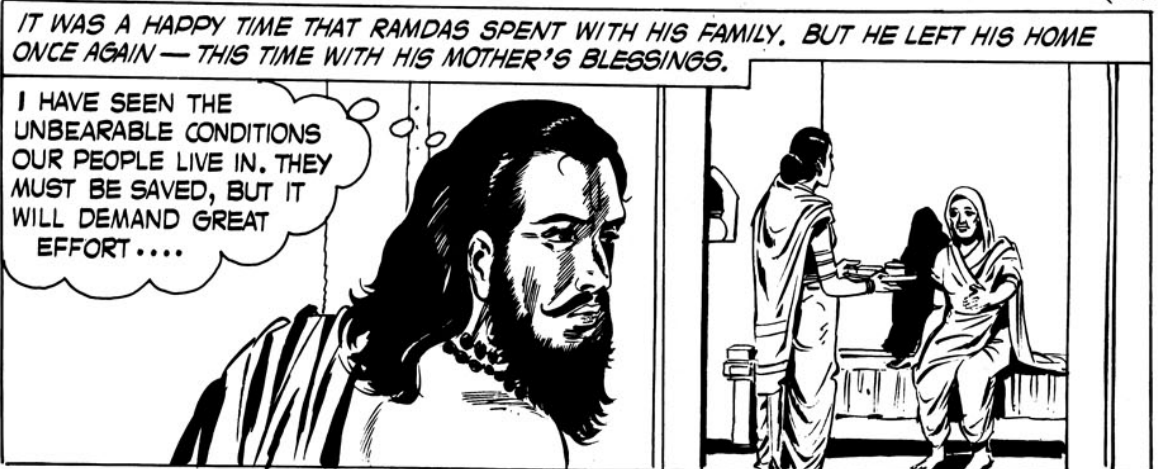
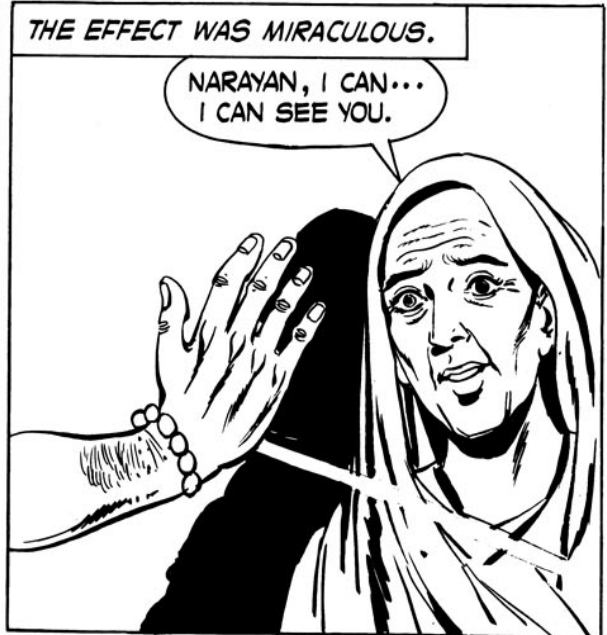
THAT VOICE, THOSE STEPS! IT COULD ONLY BE MY NARAYAN.



EMOTION WELLED UP WITHIN THE BLIND, OLD RANUBAI.

THAT SAME BUMP ON THE FOREHEAD, THE SAME LOVING ARMS. MY SON, IS THAT REALLY YOU? IF ONLY MY BLIND EYES COULD SEE YOUR DEAR FACE AGAIN!



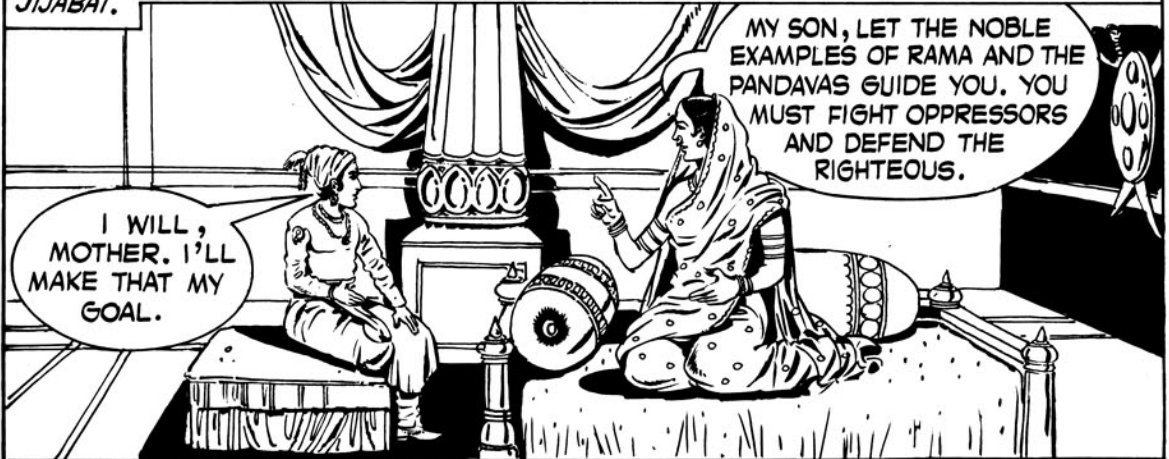


THE LEADER RAMDAS WAS LOOKING FOR WAS STILL A YOUNGSTER— SHIVAJI, THE SON OF A MARATHA NOBLEMAN, SHAHAJI BHOSLE.



YOUNG SHIVAJI SEEMED TO KNOW EVERY STONE IN THE WILD, HILLY TERRAIN OF MAVAL,* WHERE HE GREW UP.

SHIVAJI HAD HEARD STORIES OF THE GREAT HEROES OF THE PAST FROM HIS MOTHER, JIJABAI.



I WILL, MOTHER. I'LL MAKE THAT MY GOAL.

MY SON, LET THE NOBLE EXAMPLES OF RAMA AND THE PANDAVAS GUIDE YOU. YOU MUST FIGHT OPPRESSORS AND DEFEND THE RIGHTEOUS.

SHIVAJI'S COMRADES WERE THE HARDY, LOYAL YOUTHS OF MAVAL, IN WHOSE COMPANY HE LEARNT TO RIDE AND FIGHT.



* IN WESTERN MAHARASHTRA

ONE DAY AT THE SHIVA TEMPLE AT RAIRESHWAR, SHIVAJI TOOK AN OATH.

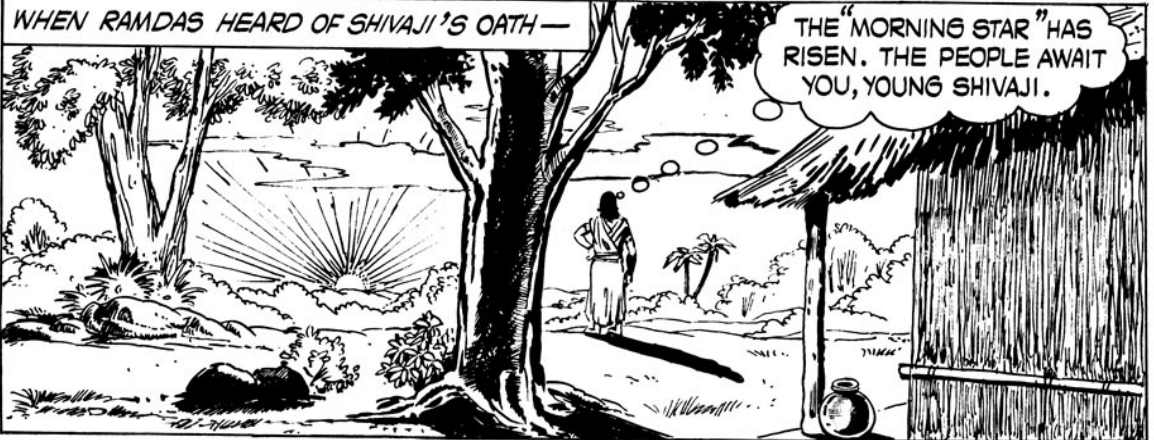
O SHIVA, I SWEAR THAT I WILL NOT REST TILL I ACHIEVE MY GOAL.

WE WILL STAND BY YOU, COME WHAT MAY.



WHEN RAMDAS HEARD OF SHIVAJI'S OATH —

THE "MORNING STAR" HAS RISEN. THE PEOPLE AWAIT YOU, YOUNG SHIVAJI.



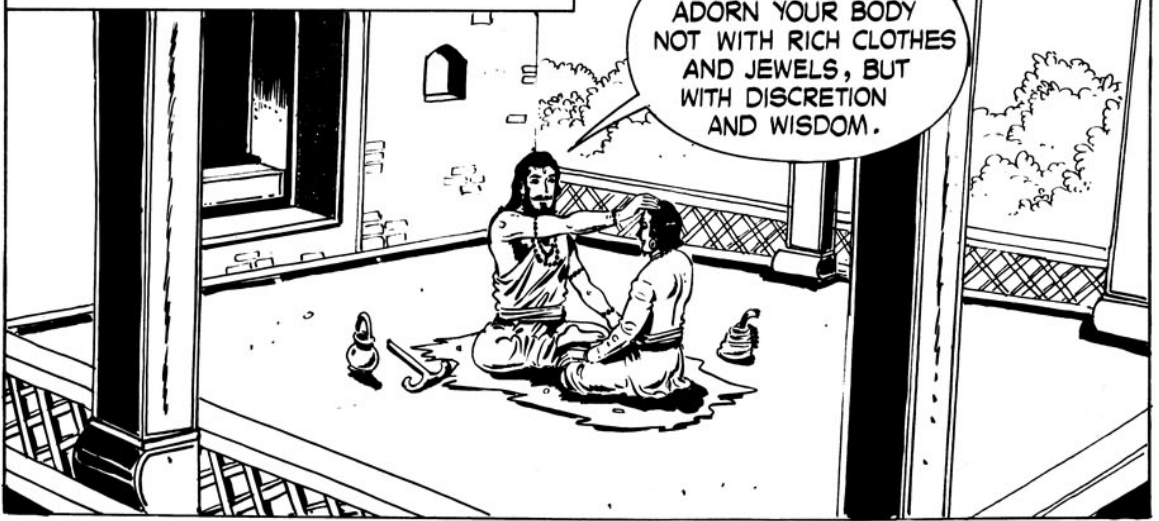
RAMDAS AND SHIVAJI HAD HEARD OF EACH OTHER. THEY MET FOR THE FIRST TIME AT A RAMA-NAVAMI FESTIVAL AT MASUR. SAINT AND WARRIOR WERE EQUALLY IMPRESSED.

HE'S YOUNG, BUT HE CARRIES HIMSELF LIKE A PRINCE. HE WILL LIBERATE THE LAND.

HE TOWERS OVER ALL. GENTLE AND YET STRONG!



LATER, THEY MET AGAIN AT SHINGANAWADI. AT SHIVAJI'S REQUEST, RAMDAS INITIATED HIM AS HIS DEVOTEE.



MAY YOU UNITE THE PEOPLE UNDER YOUR RULE. MAY YOU GOVERN ACCORDING TO DHARMA * AND RELIEVE THE MISERY OF THE PEOPLE. MAY YOU SUCCEED IN ALL YOUR EFFORTS.

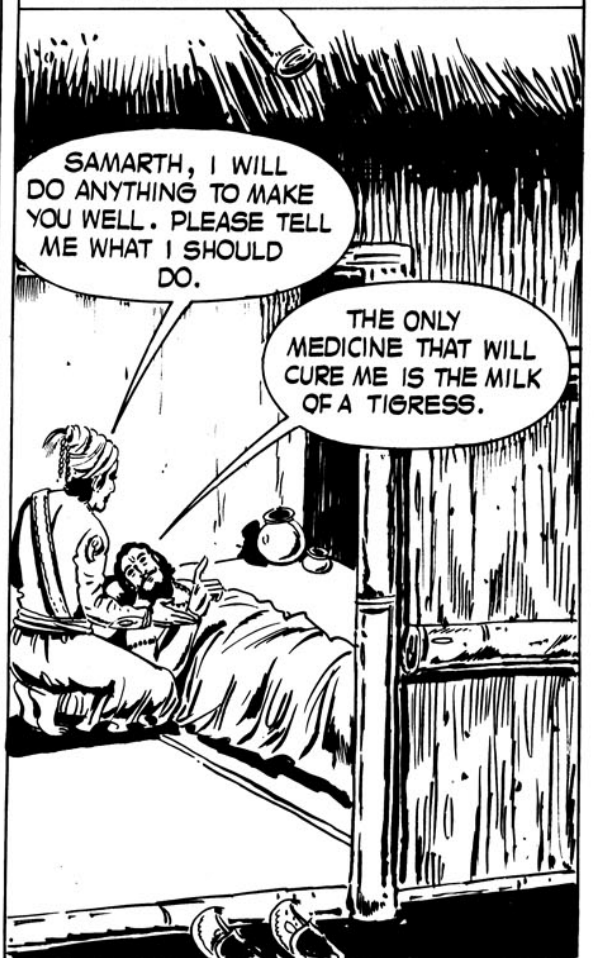
YOU INSPIRE ME, O SAMARTH. I WILL NOT FAIL YOU.

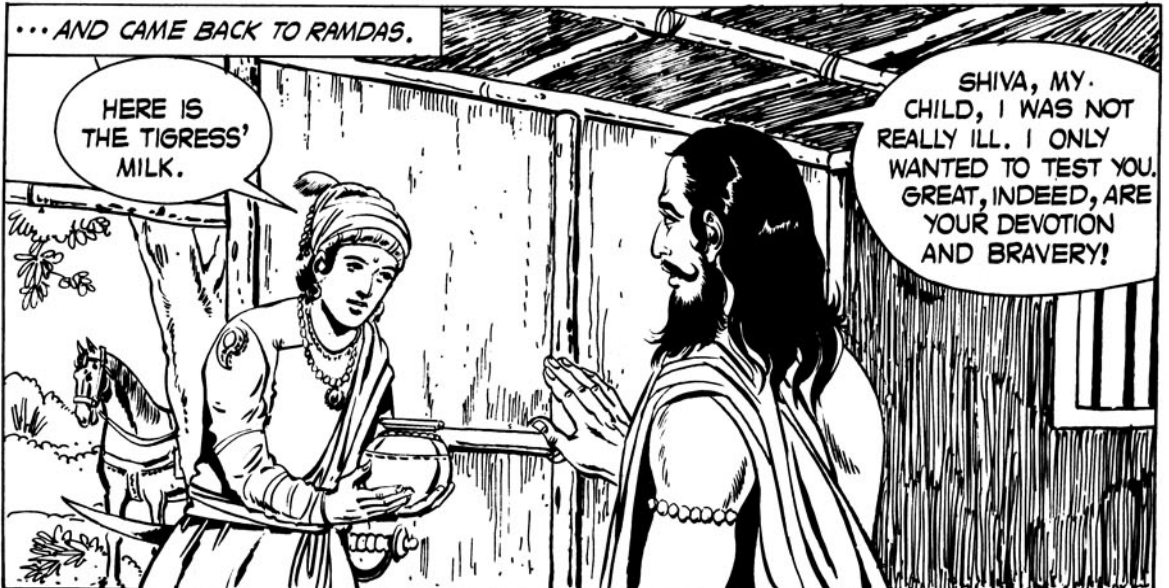
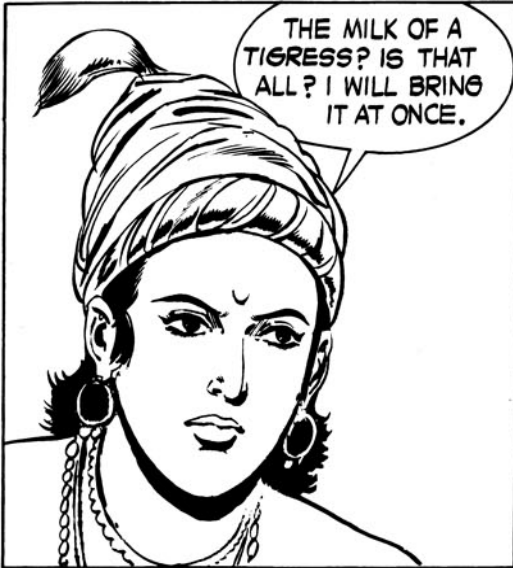


ONE DAY, RAMDAS SENT WORD THAT HE WAS ILL. SHIVAJI HURRIED TO HIS SIDE.

SAMARTH, I WILL DO ANYTHING TO MAKE YOU WELL. PLEASE TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD DO.

THE ONLY MEDICINE THAT WILL CURE ME IS THE MILK OF A TIGRESS.



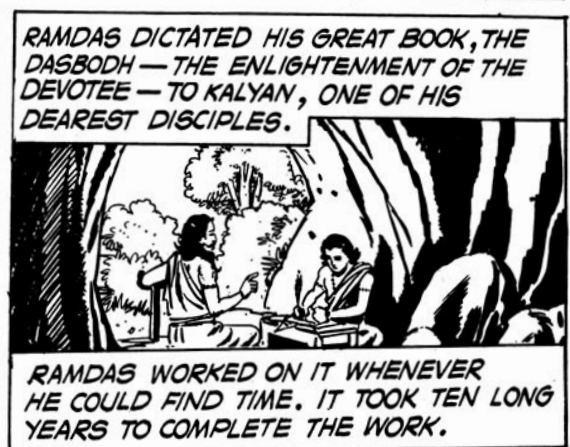
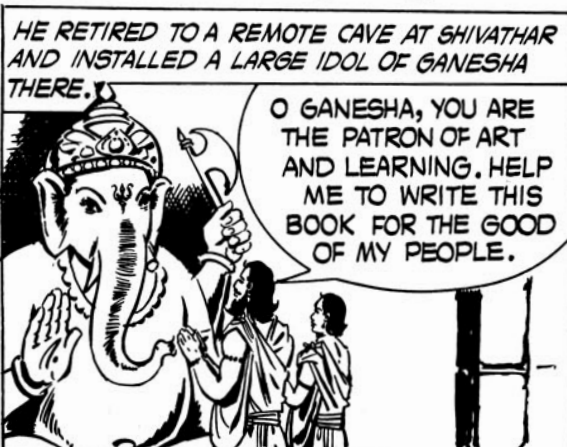
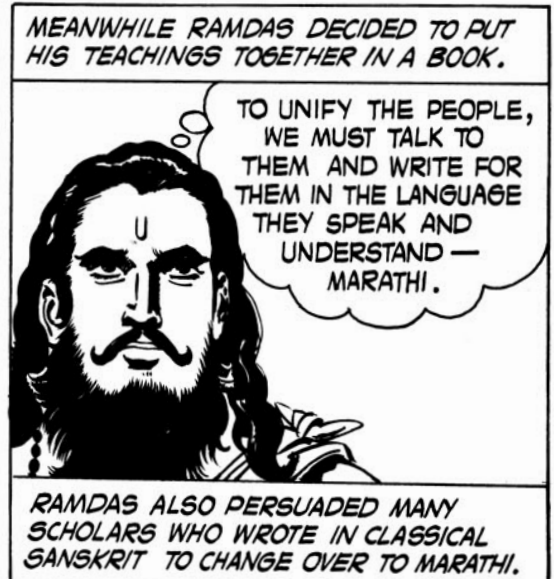
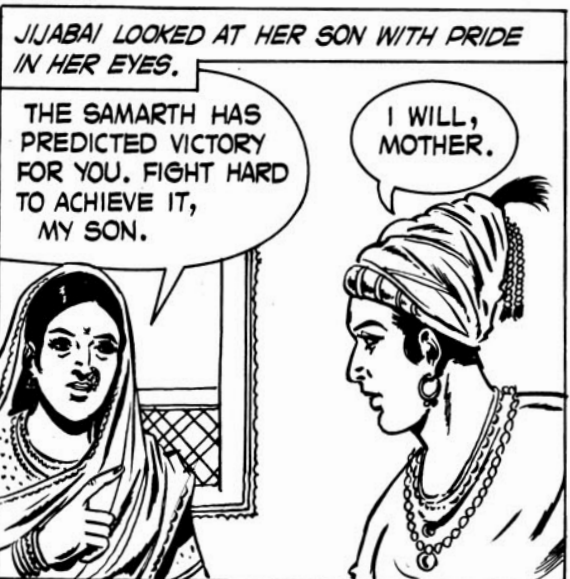
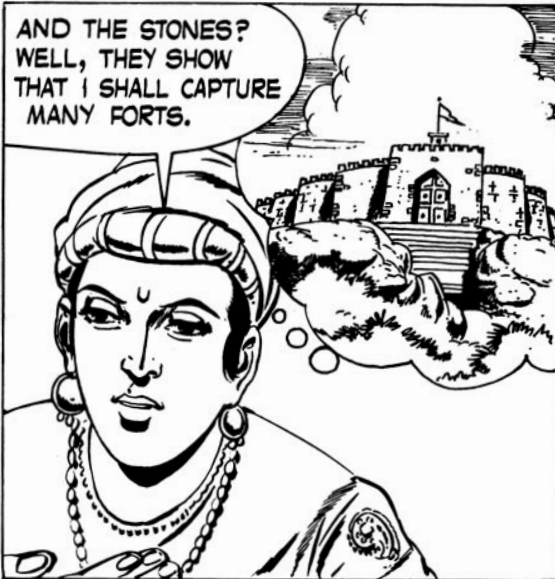


PLEASED WITH SHIVAJI, RAMDAS MADE A SACRED OFFERING TO HIM.



WHEN SHIVAJI REACHED HOME, HE OPENED THE BUNDLE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS MOTHER. WHAT IT CONTAINED TOOK JIJABAI BY SURPRISE.





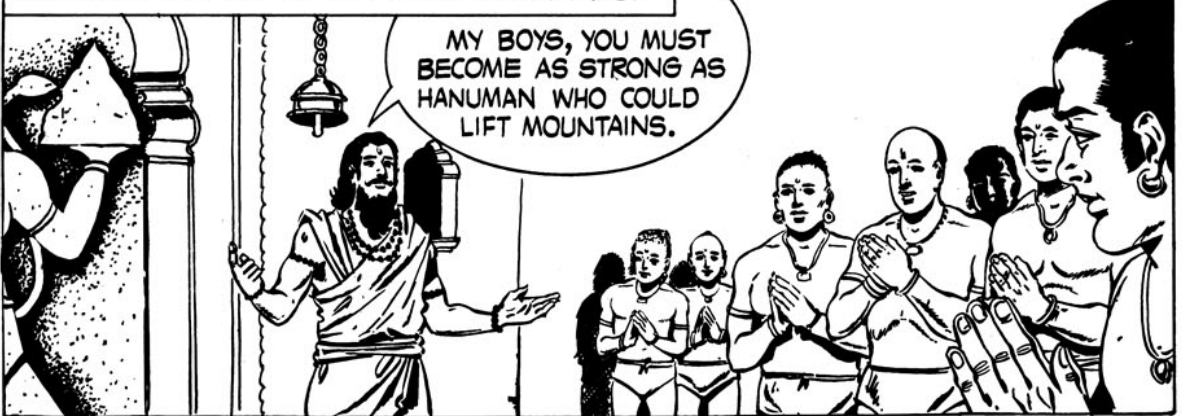
HIS DISCIPLES WENT OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE, HELPING THEM, INSPIRING THEM, AND MOBILISING THEM TO FIGHT INJUSTICE.



JUST AS LORD RAMA FOUGHT THE DEMON, RAVANA, LET US RISE AND FIGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION.



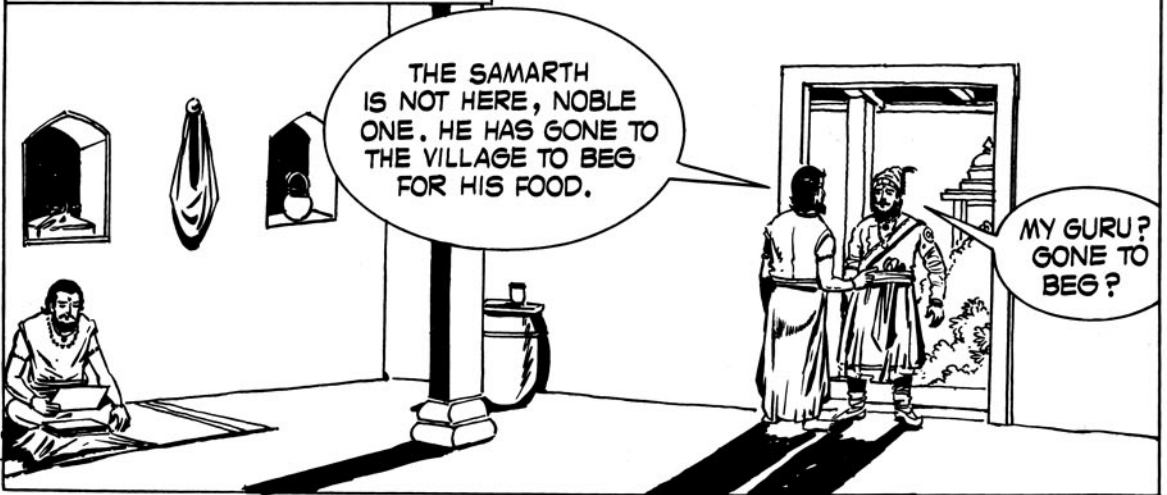
THEY ALSO TRAINED YOUNG MEN AND BOYS IN GYMNASTICS AND THE MARTIAL ARTS. RAMDAS OFTEN VISITED THE TRAINING CENTRES.



INSPIRED BY THE CALL GIVEN BY RAMDAS, SEVERAL YOUNG MEN CAME FORWARD TO JOIN SHIVAJI.

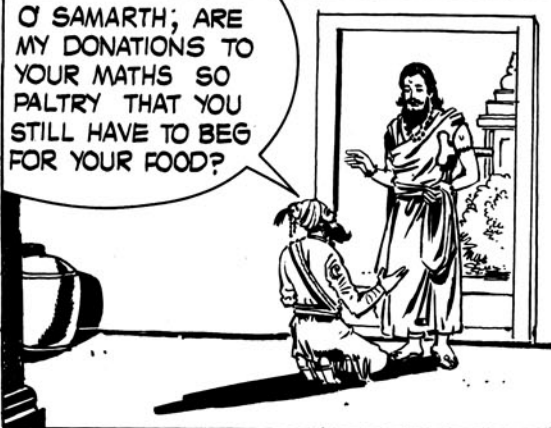


SHIVAJI WOULD OFTEN GO TO RAMDAS FOR ADVICE. ONE DAY HE CALLED UNEXPECTEDLY.



SHIVAJI WAS UPSET. WHEN RAMDAS RETURNED, HE KNELT BEFORE HIM.

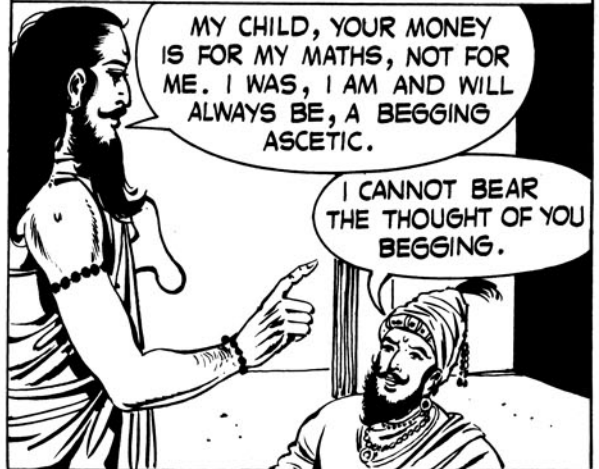
O SAMARTH; ARE MY DONATIONS TO YOUR MATHS SO PALTRY THAT YOU STILL HAVE TO BEG FOR YOUR FOOD?



RAMDAS SMILED DOWN AT HIS DISCIPLE.

MY CHILD, YOUR MONEY IS FOR MY MATHS, NOT FOR ME. I WAS, I AM AND WILL ALWAYS BE, A BEGGING ASCETIC.

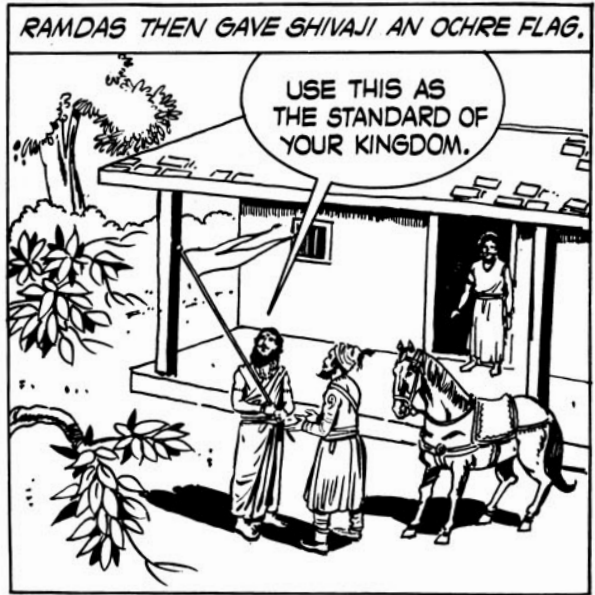
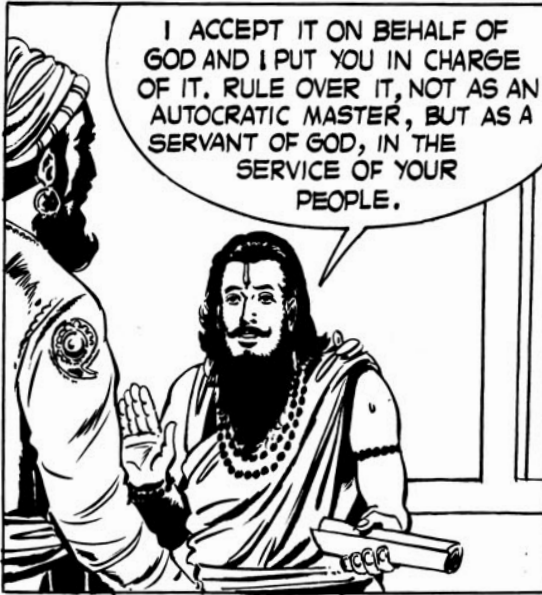
I CANNOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF YOU BEGGING.



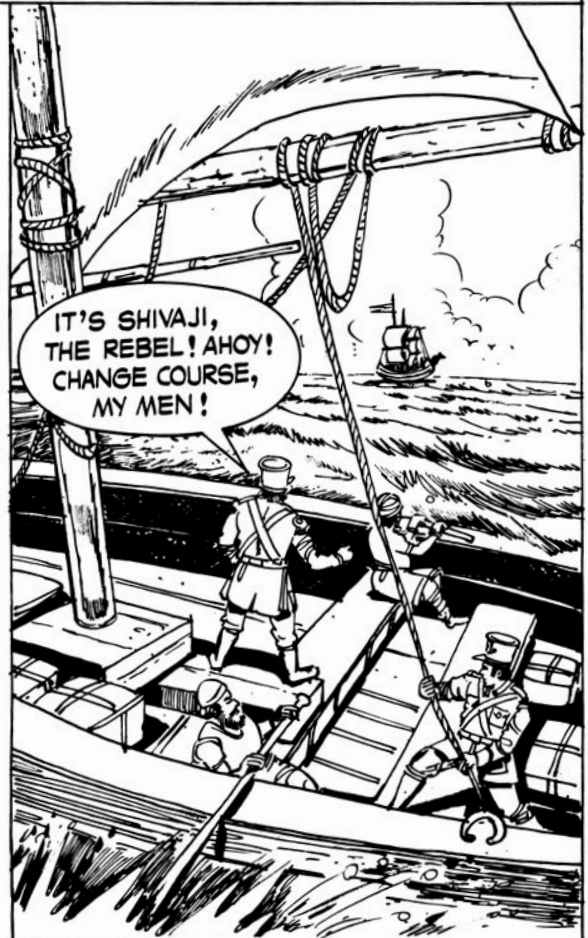
IN A MOMENTOUS DECISION, SHIVAJI MADE A DEED, GIFTING AWAY HIS KINGDOM TO RAMDAS.

TAKE THIS, O SAMARTH. I ENDOW MY ENTIRE KINGDOM AND ALL THAT I HAVE, TO YOU.





IT WAS THIS VERY FLAG THAT FLEW ON THE LOFTY FORTS THAT SHIVAJI CAPTURED; WHILE ON THE SHIPS OF SHIVAJI'S NAVY FLUTTERED AN OCHRE SAIL.



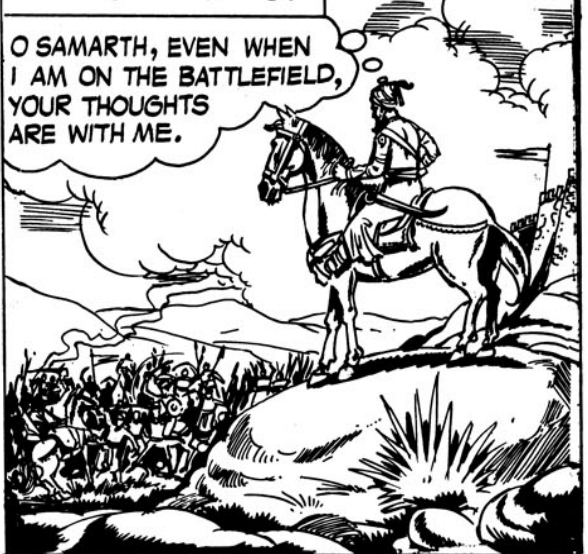
HIS GURU RAMDAS' BLESSINGS AFTER EACH VICTORY INSPIRED HIM ON TO THE NEXT.

YOU HAVE BEEN JUST AND RIGHTEOUS; MANY HAVE TAKEN FRIGHT, MANY HAVE SOUGHT YOUR PROTECTION. GREETINGS TO YOU, O BENEVOLENT KING...



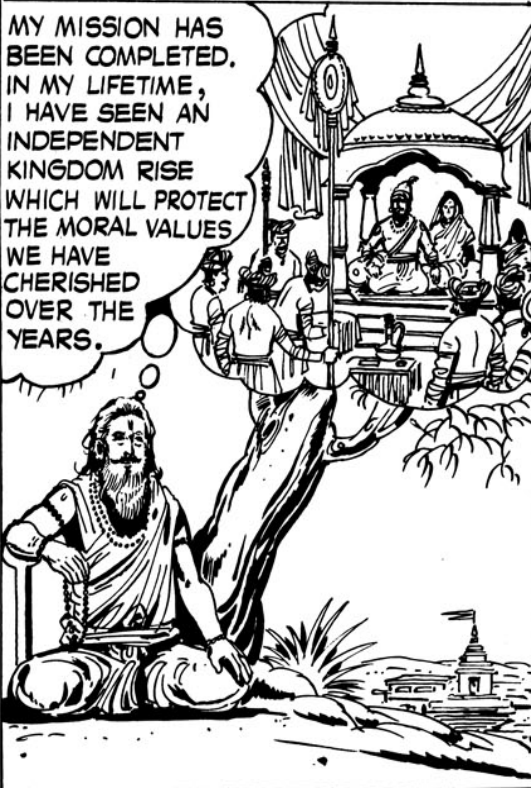
FROM A SMALL-TIME REBEL WITH A HANDFUL OF MEN SCATTERED OVER BARREN VALLEYS, SHIVAJI WAS NOW A MIGHTY GENERAL, LEADING THOUSANDS.

O SAMARTH, EVEN WHEN I AM ON THE BATTLEFIELD, YOUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH ME.



AT LAST, SHIVAJI WAS CROWNED CHHATRAPATI OF A LARGE PART OF MAVAL WHICH HE HAD LIBERATED. THE CORONATION TOOK PLACE AT RAIGADH, BUT RAMDAS COULD NOT ATTEND THE CEREMONY.

MY MISSION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. IN MY LIFETIME, I HAVE SEEN AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM RISE WHICH WILL PROTECT THE MORAL VALUES WE HAVE CHERISHED OVER THE YEARS.



LATER WHEN RAMDAS CONVENED A CONFERENCE OF SAINTS AND SAGES AT A FORT NEAR SATARA, SHIVAJI WAS ABLE TO PAY HIM A DELAYED TRIBUTE.

HAIL TO THEE, MY MASTER. I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT—PROTECT MY HONOUR. YOU ARE THE CHHATRAPATI.



THE PLACE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS SAJANGAD AND IT WAS THERE THAT RAMDAS PASSED AWAY. THE TEMPLE, CONSTRUCTED OVER HIS MORTAL REMAINS, STANDS AT SAJANGAD TO THIS DAY.

RAJA DESING

THE LEGENDARY HERO OF TAMILNADU



Raja Desing

IN THE YEAR 1714 YOUNG DESING, THE SON OF THE RULER OF GINGEE*, RAJA SARUP SINGH, LEFT FOR DISTANT BUNDELKHAND FOR HIS MARRIAGE.



ALONG WITH HIS LARGE ARMY, DESING WAS ALSO ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND, MOHABBAT KHAN.

IT'S A PITY THAT YOUR FATHER WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND YOUR WEDDING, DESING.

YES... IF ONLY HE HAD BEEN KEEPING GOOD HEALTH.



WITHIN A FEW WEEKS, THE PARTY REACHED BUNDELKHAND...

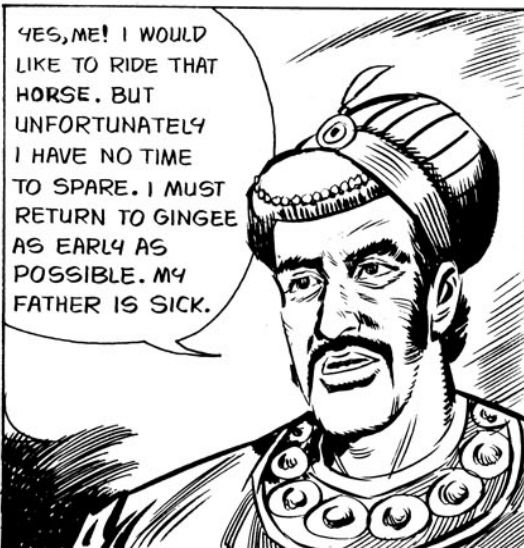
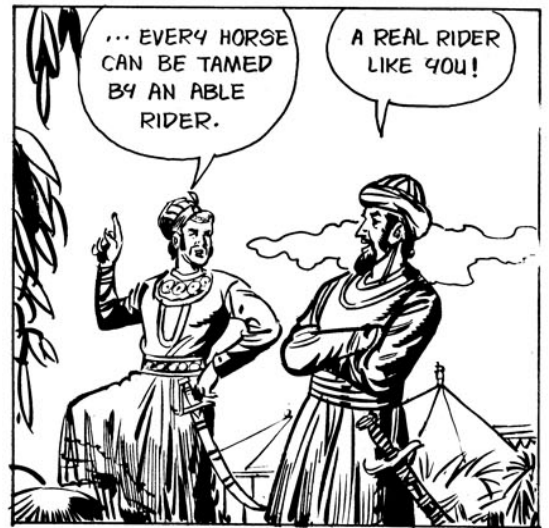
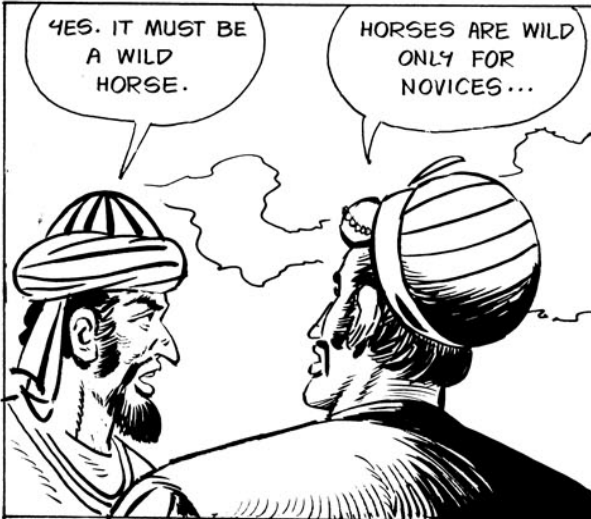


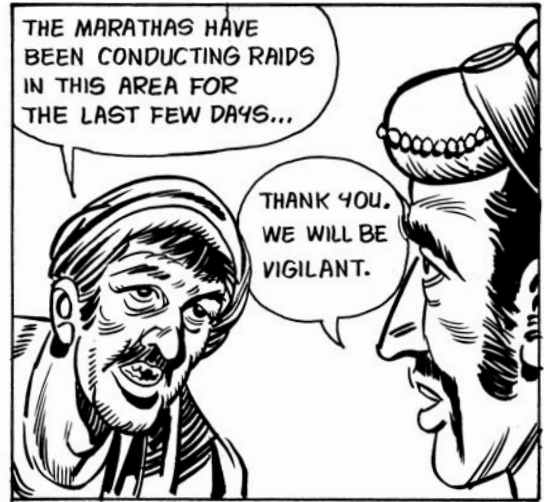
...AND DESING'S WEDDING WAS CELEBRATED WITH GREAT POMF.

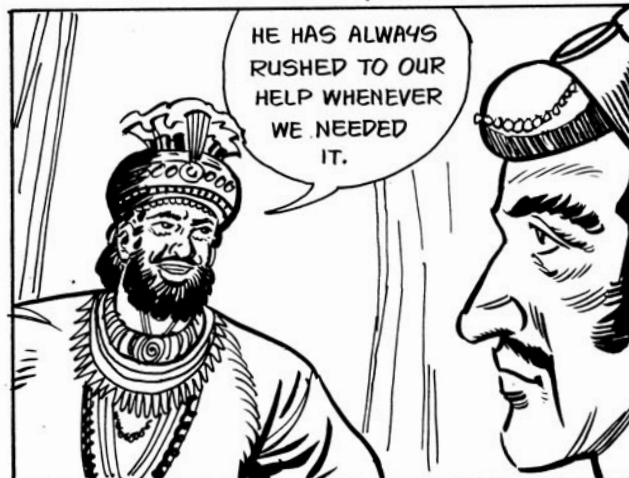
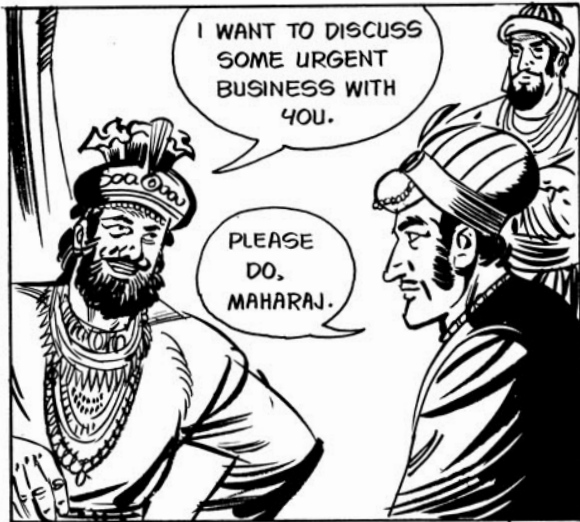


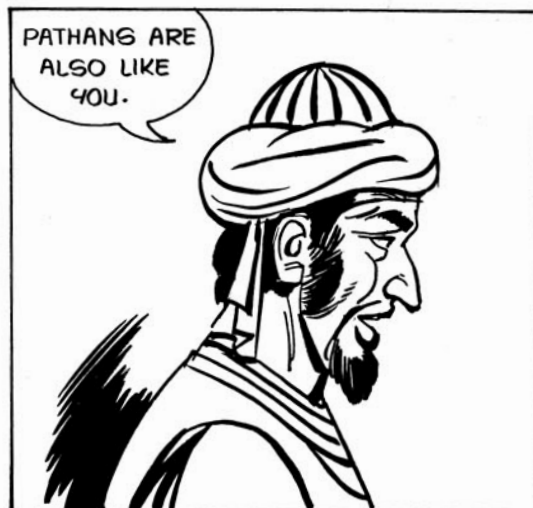
* IN PRESENT-DAY TAMIL NADU.

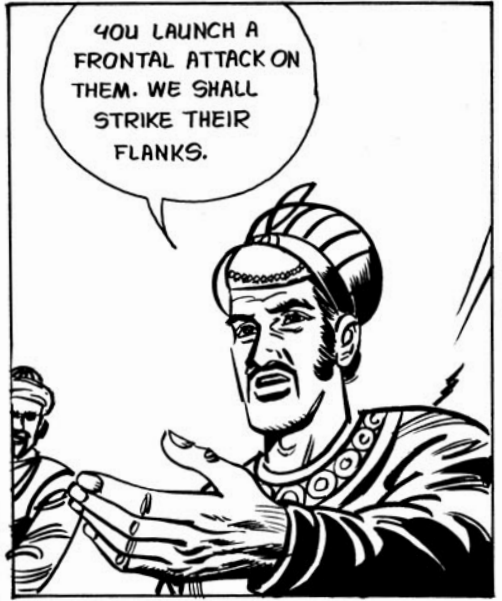
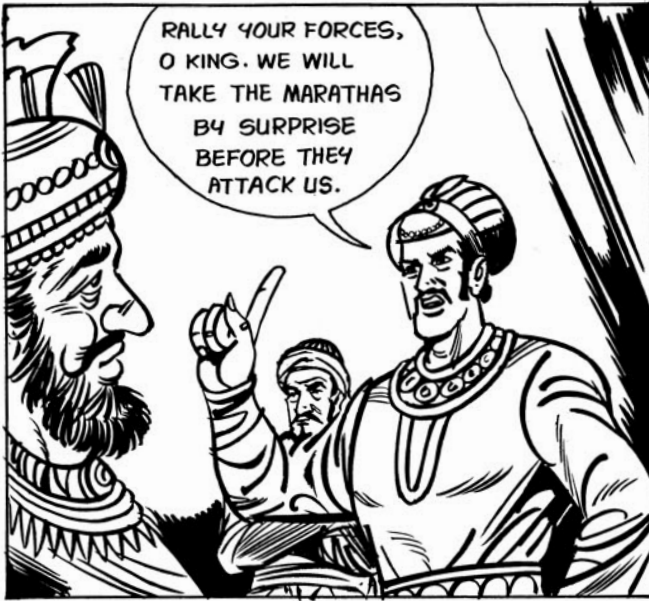
SOON AFTER THE WEDDING THE NEWLY WEDS SET OUT FOR GINGEE. THE RETINUE CAMPED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BEDANUR.











THE NEXT MORNING, DESING'S FORCES TOOK THE MARATHAS BY SURPRISE...



... AND AFTER A SERIES OF
SHORT BUT FIERCE
ENCOUNTERS...



... THEY DROVE AWAY THE RAIDERS.



GLORY TO
VALIANT
DEHING.

AS A TOKEN OF HIS GRATITUDE, THE KING OF
BEDANUR PRESENTED DESING WITH A LAKH OF
RUPEES.



THANK YOU,
SIRE!

... AND THEN...

I AM TOLD, SIRE,
THAT YOU HAVE A
HORSE WHICH
DOES NOT ALLOW
ANYONE TO
RIDE IT.

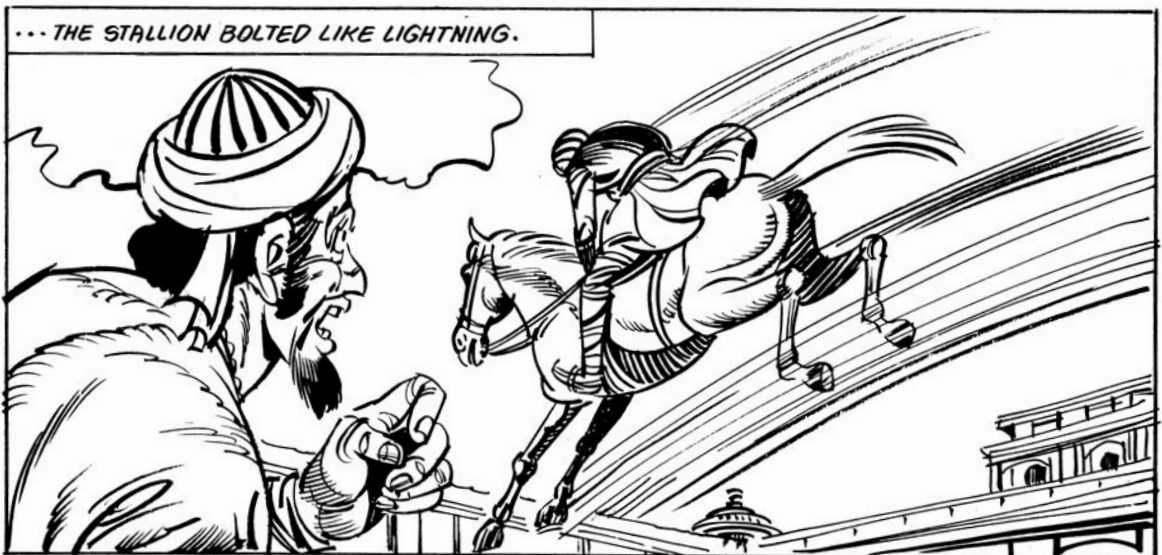
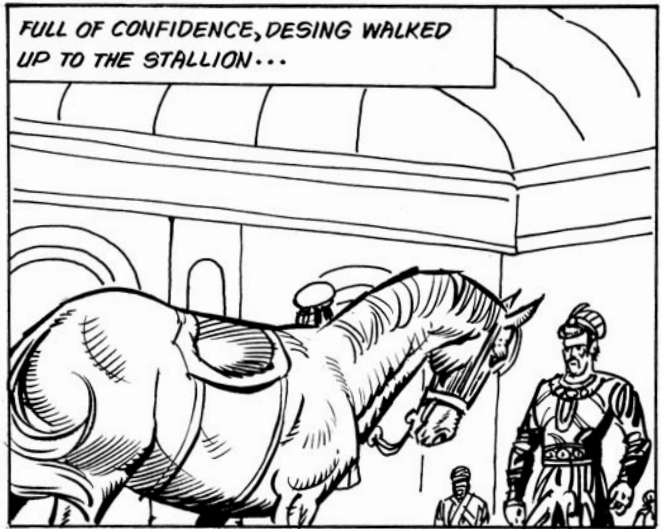
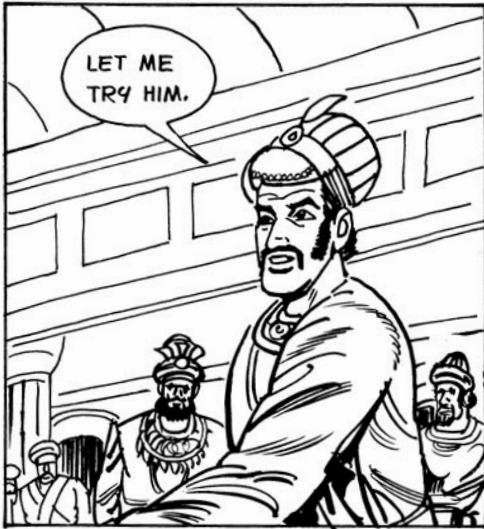


THE SPARKLING WHITE STALLION WAS
BROUGHT TO DESING.



BEHOLD THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL,
PRICELESS,
STALLION WITH THE
WILDEST OF
TEMPERS.





THE STALLION TRIED
ALL ITS TRICKS TO
THROW OFF DESING.
BUT DESING BROUGHT
IT UNDER CONTROL.



LONG
LIVE PRINCE
DESING!

SINCE YOU TAMED
HIM, THE
STALLION IS
YOURS.



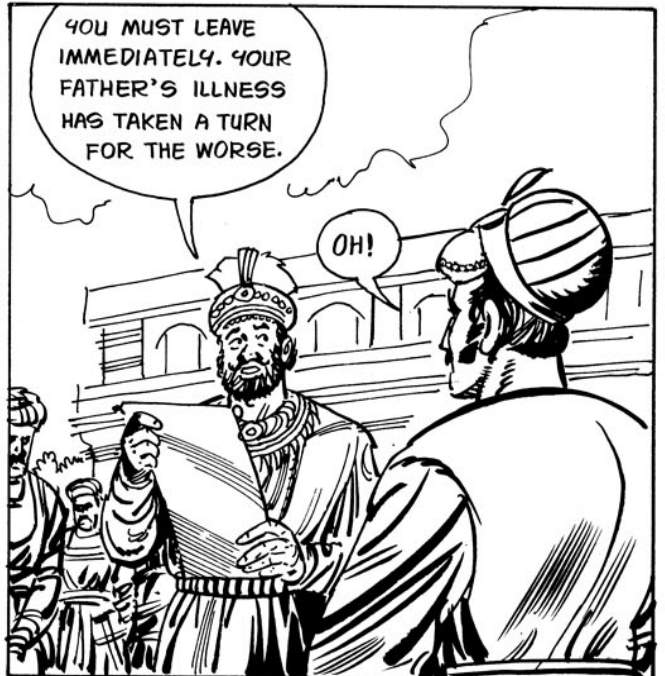
JUST THEN —

YOUR
MAJESTY, I
BRING A MESSAGE
FROM GINGEE.



YOU MUST LEAVE
IMMEDIATELY. YOUR
FATHER'S ILLNESS
HAS TAKEN A TURN
FOR THE WORSE.

OH!



SOON DESING AND HIS
RETINUE WERE ON THEIR
WAY TO GINGEE.



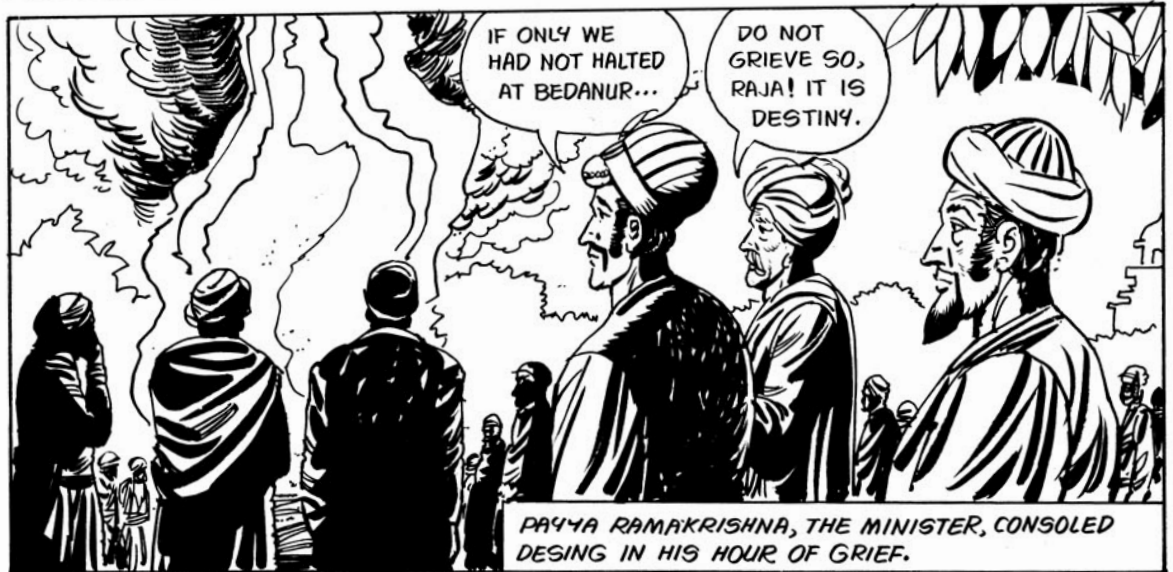
WHEN DESING ARRIVED AT GINGEE —

ALAS, IT'S TOO
LATE
PRINCE DESING.



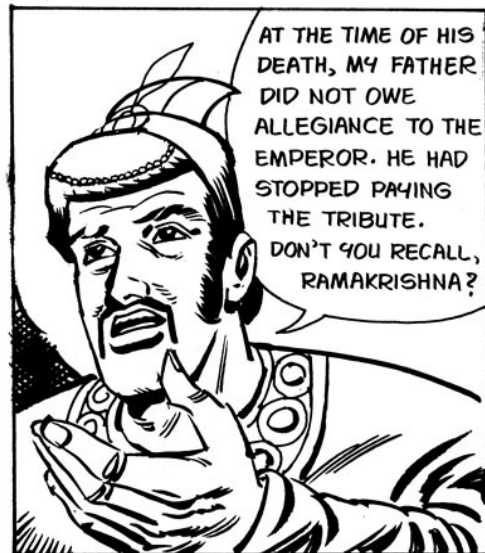
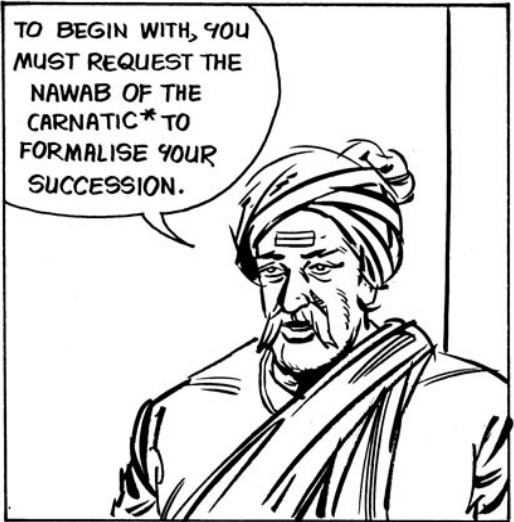
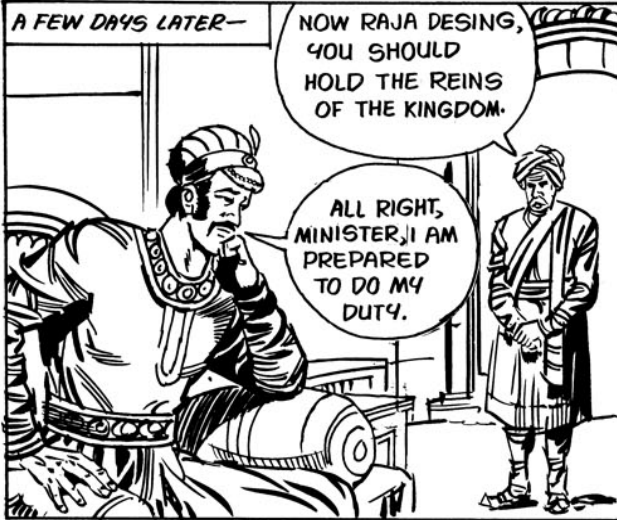
IF ONLY WE
HAD NOT HALTED
AT BEDANUR...

DO NOT
GRIEVE SO,
RAJA! IT IS
DESTINY.

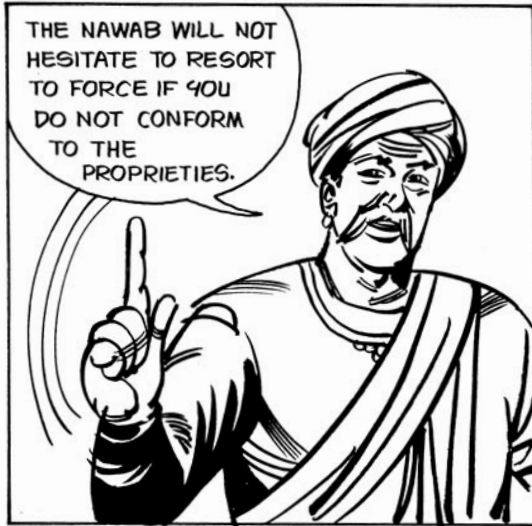
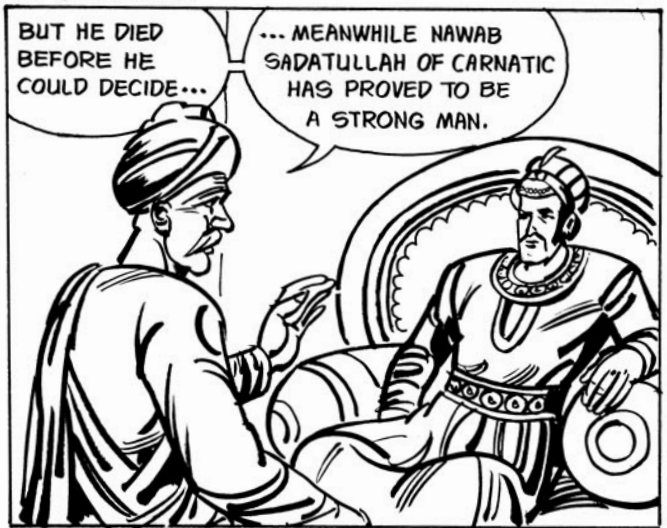
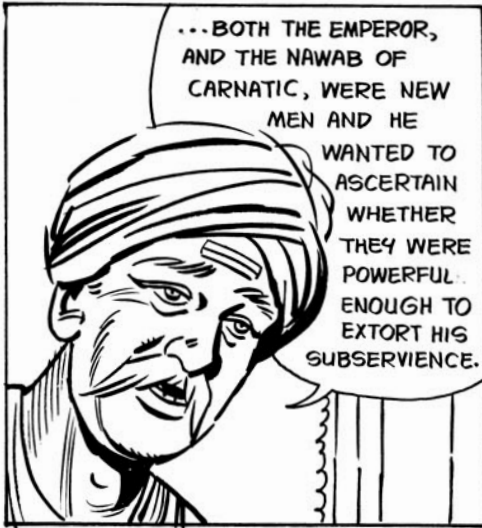


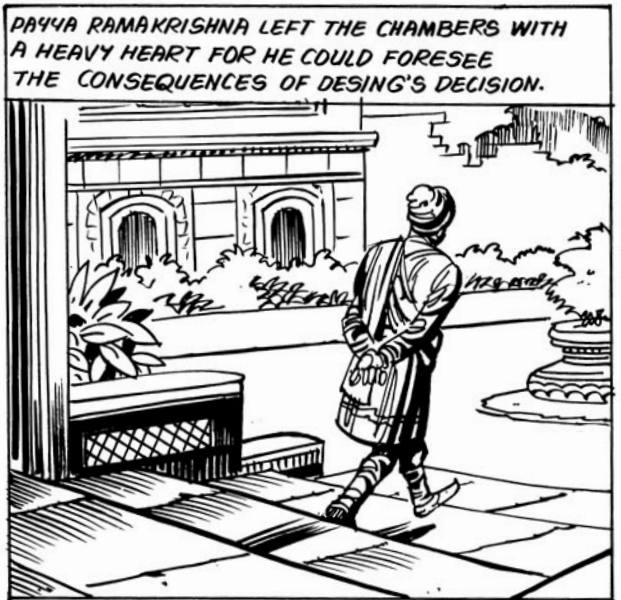
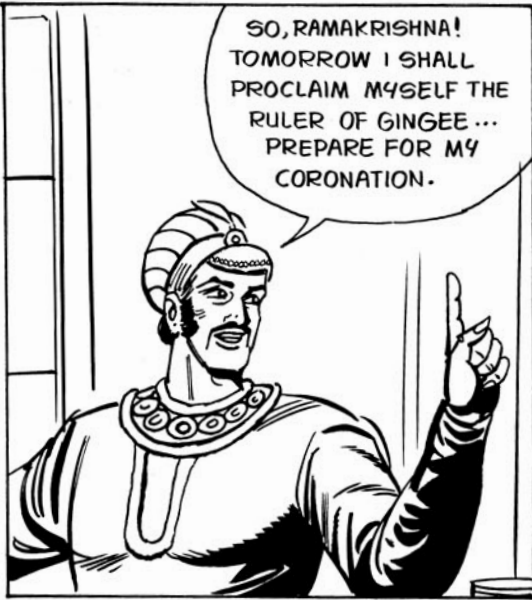
PAYYA RAMAKRISHNA, THE MINISTER, CONSOLED
DESING IN HIS HOUR OF GRIEF.

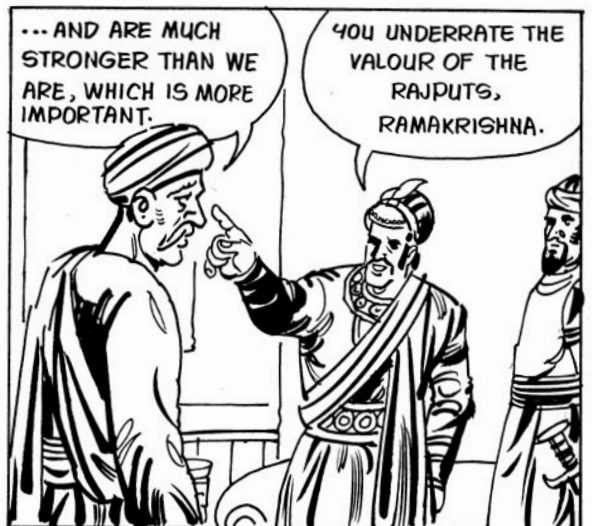
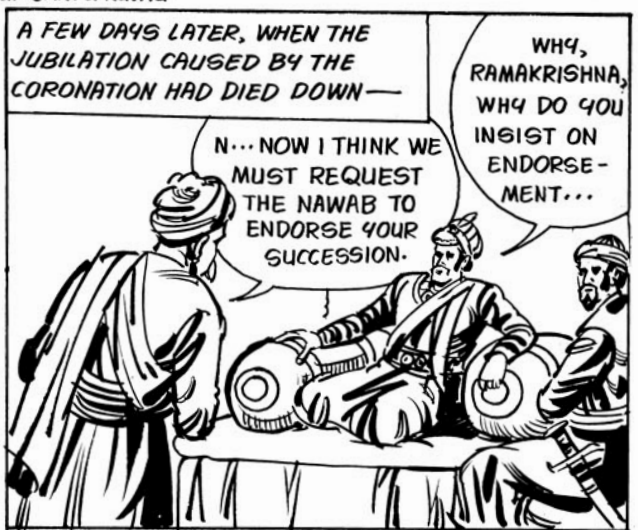
A FEW DAYS LATER—



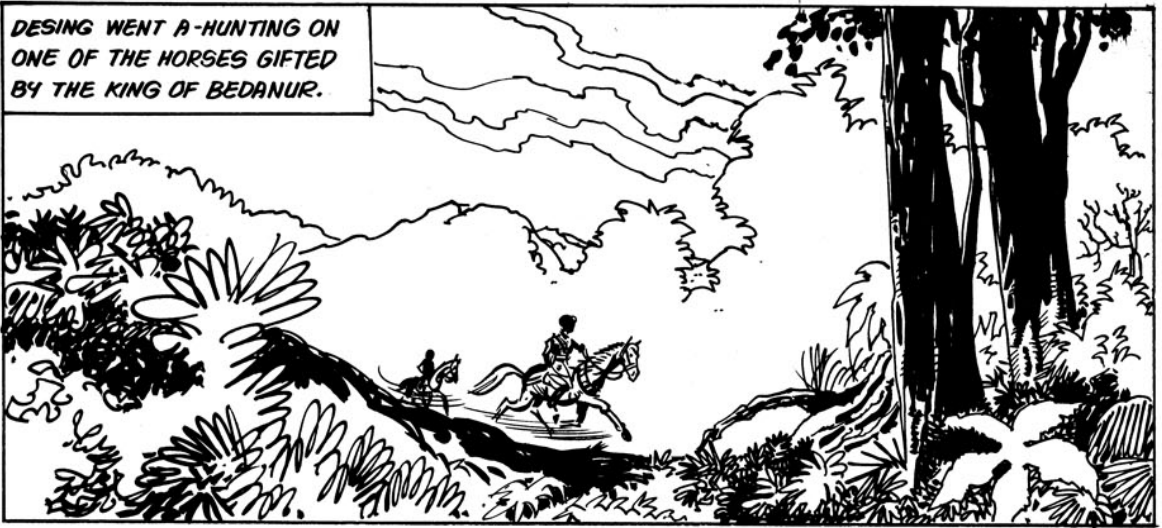
* KARNATAKA.







DESING WENT A-HUNTING ON
ONE OF THE HORSES GIFTED
BY THE KING OF BEDANUR.



AS DESING AND MOHABBAT KHAN WERE RETURNING FROM THE HUNT —

DESING, I'M PLANNING TO LEAVE FOR VALUDAVUR VERY SOON. I... I'VE DECIDED IT'S TIME I GOT MARRIED.

I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT, MOHABBAT.

I WISH I COULD JOIN YOU IN YOUR TRIP, BUT AS THINGS STAND TODAY...

I KNOW... YOU NEED TO REMAIN IN GINGEE, DESING.

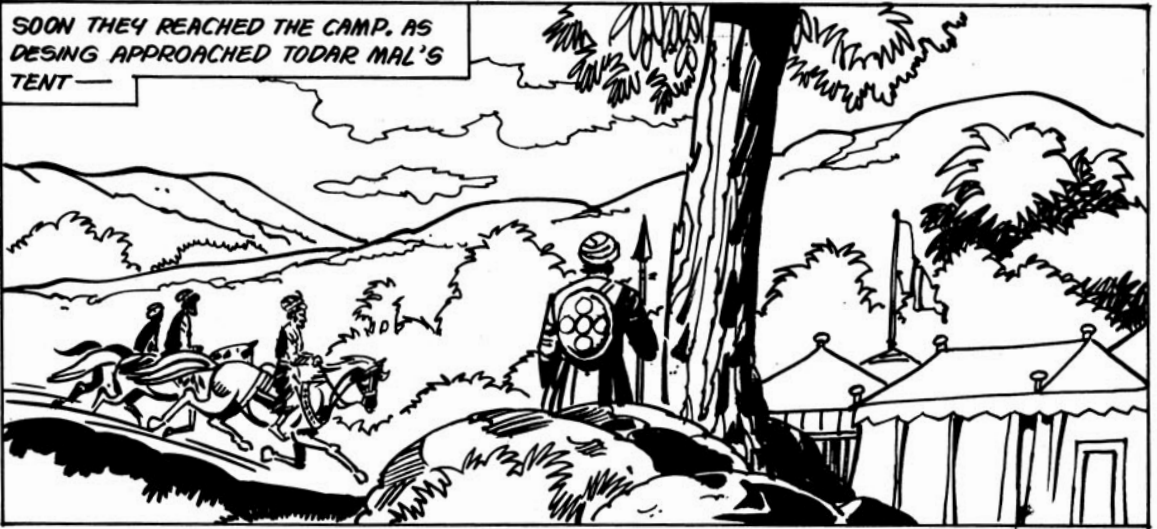
WHEN THEY REACHED THE GINGEE FORT —

I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU, O RAJA...

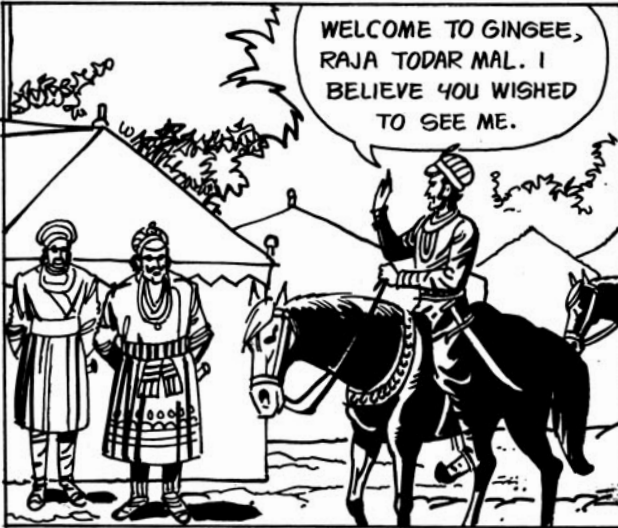
...THE NAWAB OF ARCOT HAS SENT RAJA TODAR MAL TO SEE YOU. HE IS CAMPING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL NEAR THE TEMPLE.

LET US GO TO MEET HIM.

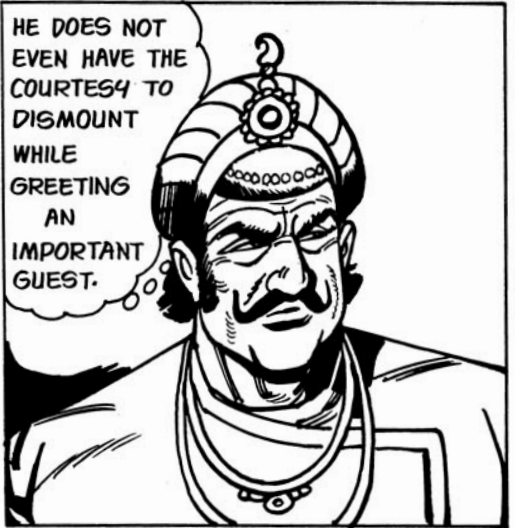
SOON THEY REACHED THE CAMP. AS DESING APPROACHED TODAR MAL'S TENT —



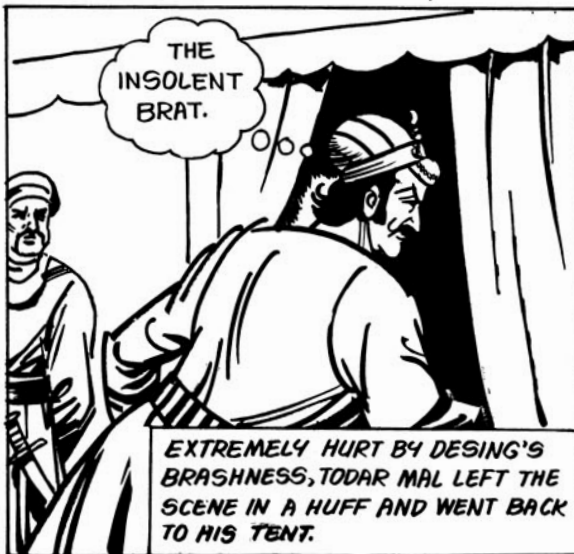
WELCOME TO GINGEE, RAJA TODAR MAL. I BELIEVE YOU WISHED TO SEE ME.



HE DOES NOT EVEN HAVE THE COURTESY TO DISMOUNT WHILE GREETING AN IMPORTANT GUEST.



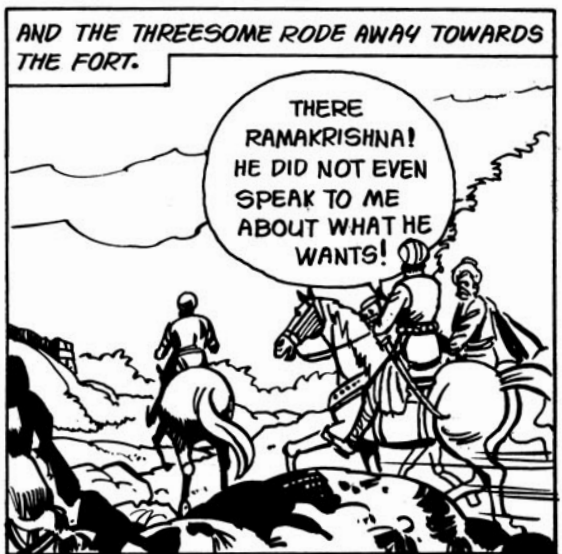
THE INSOLENT BRAT.



EXTREMELY HURT BY DESING'S BRASHNESS, TODAR MAL LEFT THE SCENE IN A HUFF AND WENT BACK TO HIS TENT.

AND THE THREESOME RODE AWAY TOWARDS THE FORT.

THERE RAMAKRISHNA! HE DID NOT EVEN SPEAK TO ME ABOUT WHAT HE WANTS!



MEANWHILE —

I MUST HANDLE
THIS SITUATION
WITH TACT. WE
SHOULD AVOID A
CONFRONTATION.



SO TODAR MAL PRESENTED HIMSELF AT THE
FORT. THE NEXT MOMENT —

WELCOME
TO THE FORT,
RAJA
TODAR MAL.

GREETINGS,
RAJA DESING.

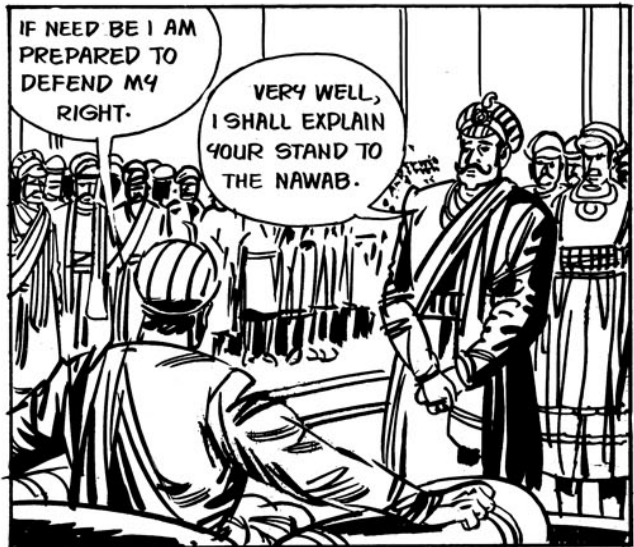
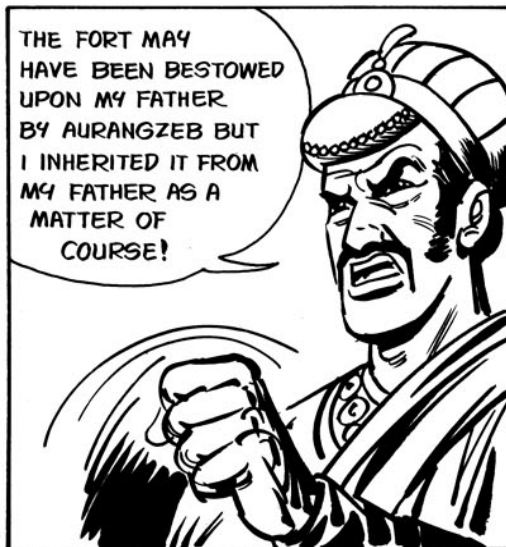
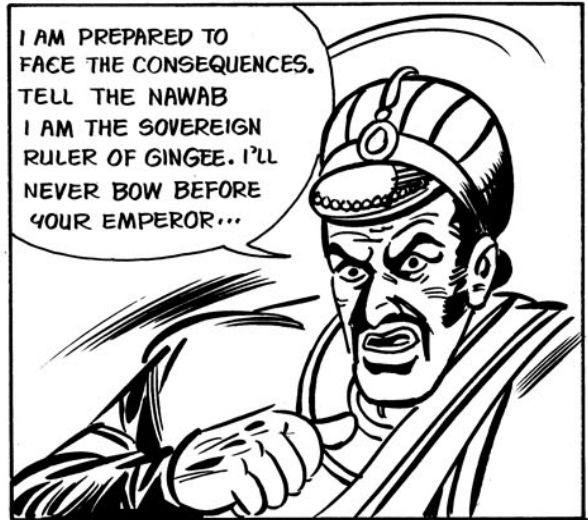
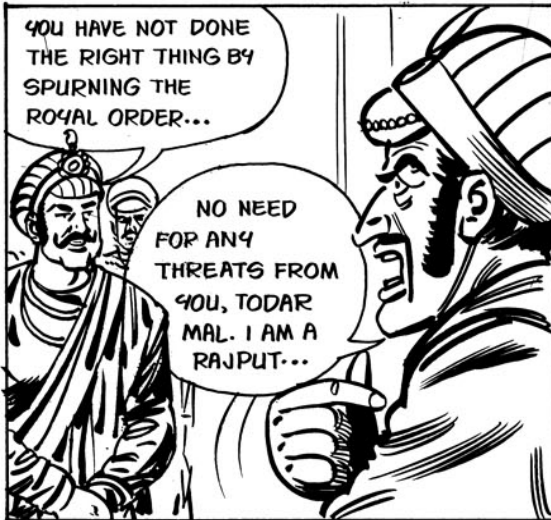


I HAVE BROUGHT
THE ROYAL
FARMAN FOR
YOU.



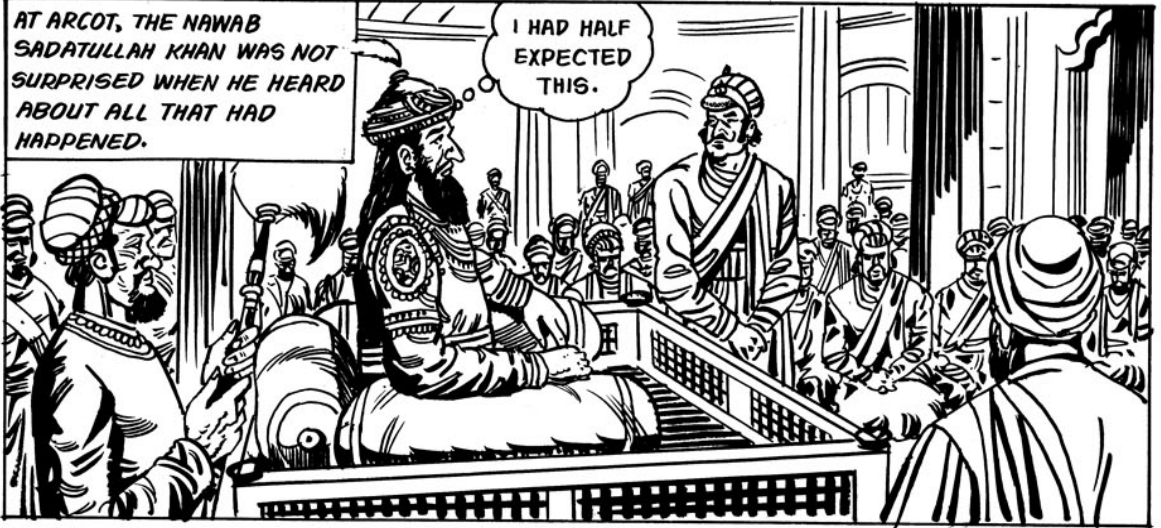
PAY UP THE ARREARS
OF TRIBUTE LEFT
OVER FROM MY
FATHER'S TIMES.
SEEK CONFIRMATION
OF MY
APPOINTMENT.





AT ARCOT, THE NAWAB SADATULLAH KHAN WAS NOT SURPRISED WHEN HE HEARD ABOUT ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

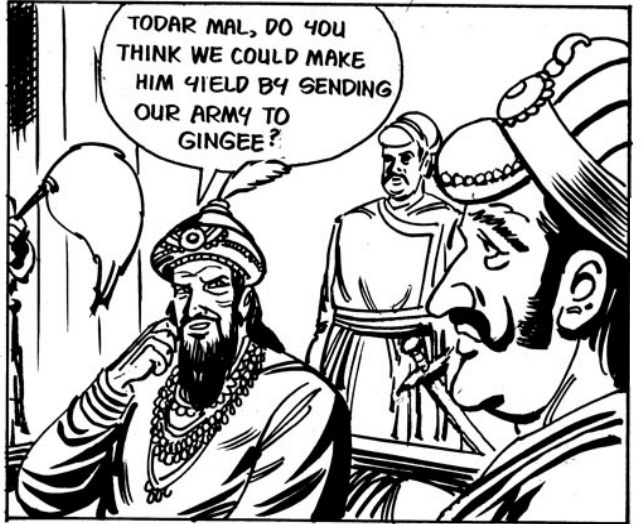
I HAD HALF EXPECTED THIS.



I HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE BOY'S INTREPID NATURE. HE SEEMS TO BE ADAMANT. FOOLISHLY SO.



TODAR MAL, DO YOU THINK WE COULD MAKE HIM YIELD BY SENDING OUR ARMY TO GINGEE?

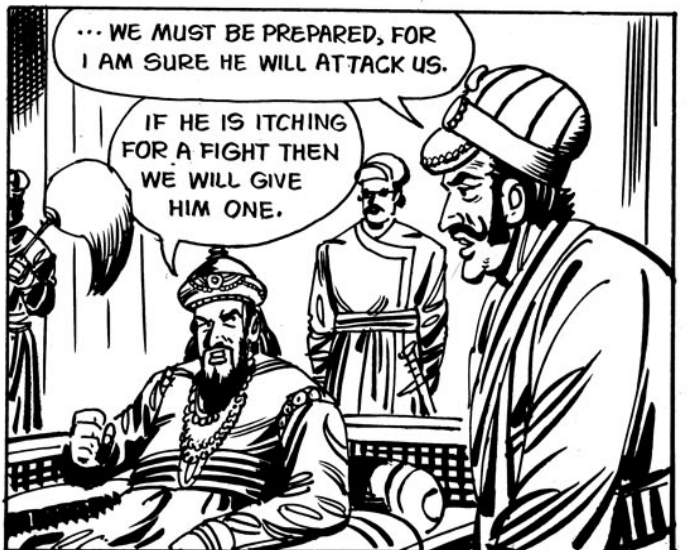


JUDGING FROM WHAT I KNOW OF DESING, I THINK HE IS SPOILING FOR A CONFRONTATION...



... WE MUST BE PREPARED, FOR I AM SURE HE WILL ATTACK US.

IF HE IS ITCHING FOR A FIGHT THEN WE WILL GIVE HIM ONE.



AND SO, THE ARCOT ARMY MARCHED ON GINGEE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NAWAB SADATULLAH KHAN. HE WAS AIDED BY VENKAT RAO, THE KILLEDAR * OF ARNI, AND BANGARU YACHCHAMA NAYAKA OF VENKATAGIRI.



THEY WERE LATER JOINED BY THE ARMIES OF MANY A VASSAL.

ONWARD TO GINGEE!



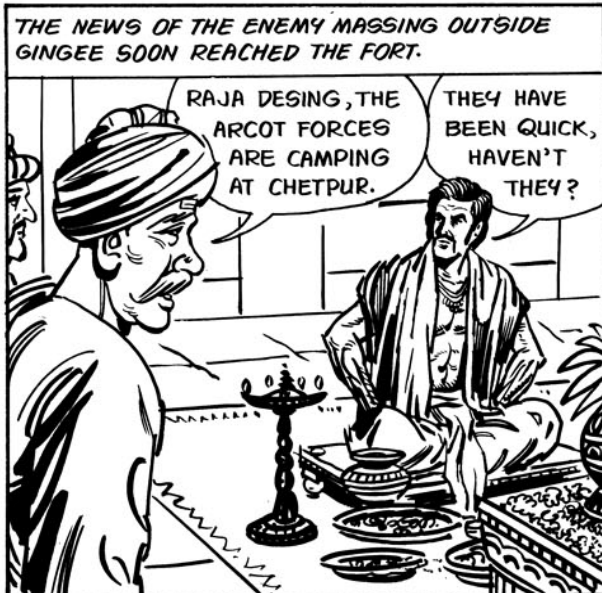
WITHIN A FEW WEEKS, THE ARMY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF GINGEE AND CAMPED AT CHETPUR NEAR THE RIVER VARAHANADI



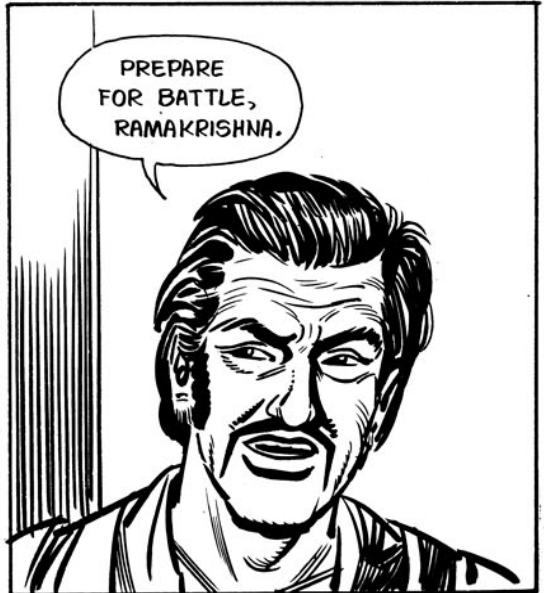
THE NEWS OF THE ENEMY MASSING OUTSIDE GINGEE SOON REACHED THE FORT.

RAJA DESING, THE ARCOT FORCES ARE CAMPING AT CHETPUR.

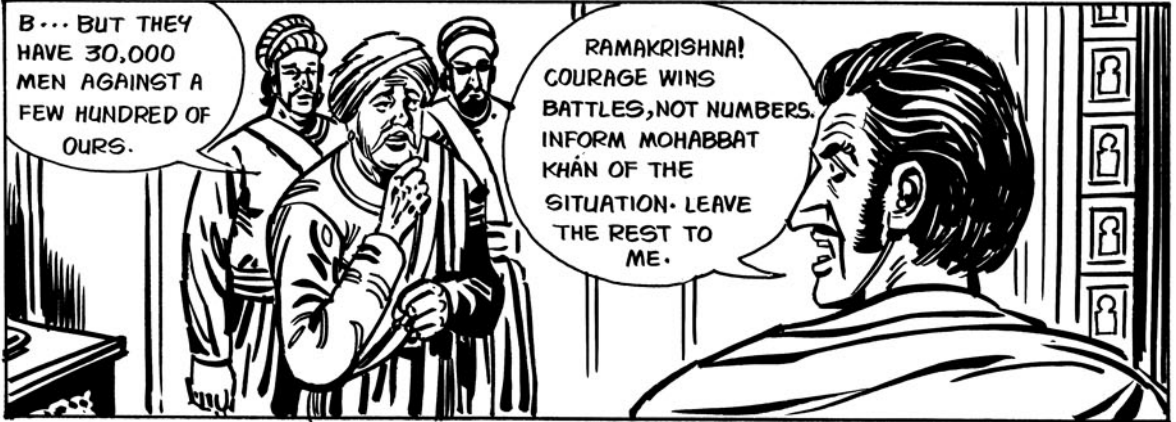
THEY HAVE BEEN QUICK, HAVEN'T THEY?



PREPARE FOR BATTLE, RAMAKRISHNA.



* MASTER OF THE FORT



WHEN THE MESSENGER REACHED VALUDAVUR, MOHABBAT KHAN WAS BUSY WITH THE PREPARATIONS OF HIS WEDDING.



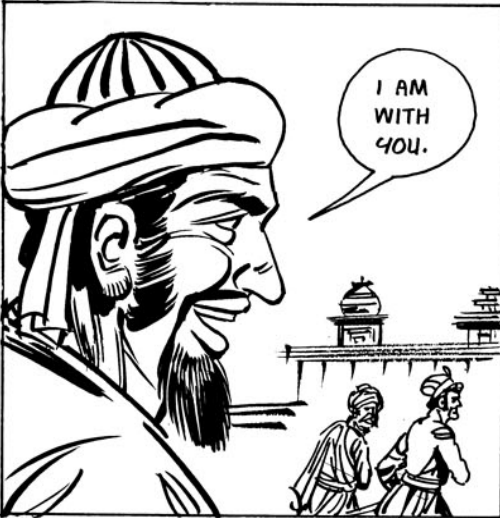
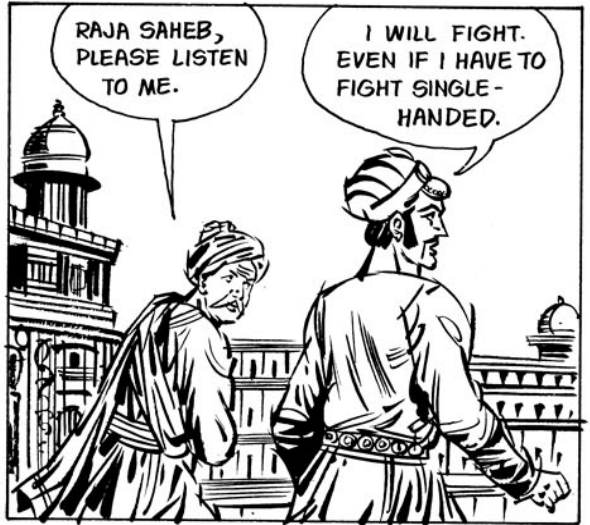
THE MESSENGER WENT STRAIGHT TO MOHABBAT KHAN.



MOHABBAT ACTED LIKE A TRUE PATHAN. LEAVING HIS MARRIAGE RITES INCOMPLETE, HE RODE AWAY TO GINGEE WITH A SMALL BAND OF HIS MEN.



MEANWHILE IN GINGEE, AS DESING CAME OUT OF THE ROYAL CHAMBERS, AFTER TAKING LEAVE OF HIS WIFE —



AND DESING LED THE FEW-HUNDRED-STRONG CAVALRY TO FACE THE NAWAB'S ARMY.



FORDING THE RIVER VARAHANADI, WHICH WAS IN SPATE, DESING'S MEN REACHED THE OTHER BANK...

ONWARD, MY VALIANT WARRIORS!

...AND RODE AHEAD IN AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE ENEMY BY SURPRISE.

BUT THE MUGHAL ARMY WAS WELL PREPARED. NAWAB SADATULLAH KHAN CALLED HIS LIEUTENANT DAULAT KHAN TO HIS SIDE.

DESING HAS COURAGE, DAULAT KHAN. I WOULD LOVE TO WIN HIM OVER. MAYBE WE COULD NEGOTIATE WITH HIM.

TRY NOT TO HARM THE INTREPID YOUNG BOY. GET HIM ALIVE. I'LL TALK IT OVER WITH HIM.

AS YOU WISH, SARKAR.

AS SOON AS THE BATTLE STARTED DAULAT KHAN DIRECTED HIS SOLDIERS TO SURROUND DESING.

UNDAUNTED, DESING PROUDLY RODE TOWARDS DAULAT KHAN.



MANY OF DESING'S MEN TOOK TO THEIR HEELS AT THE VERY SIGHT OF THE FORMIDABLE FORCES FROM ARCOT.



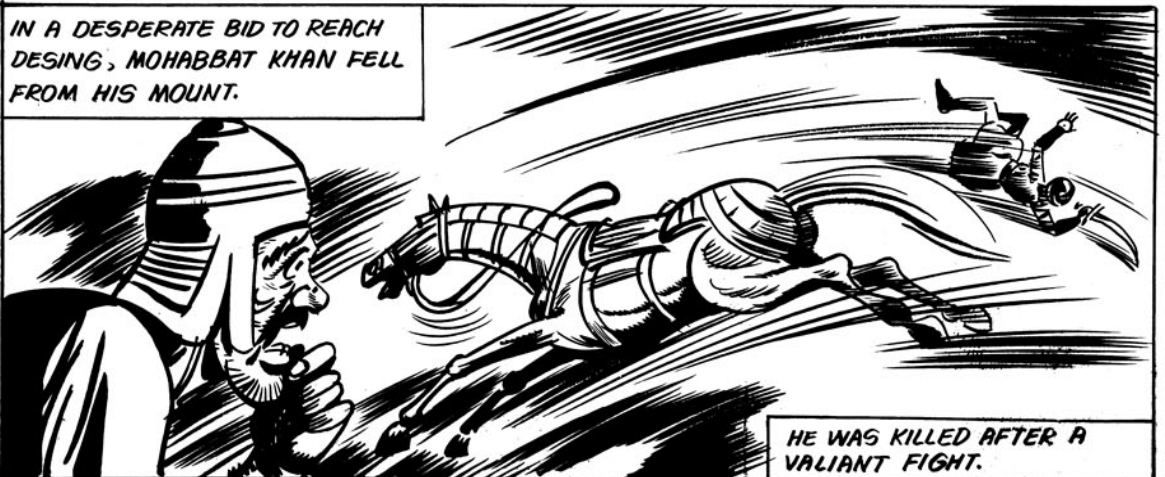
MOHABBAT KHAN TRIED BUT FAILED TO SPUR THEM ON—



AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE DESING WAS SURROUNDED.



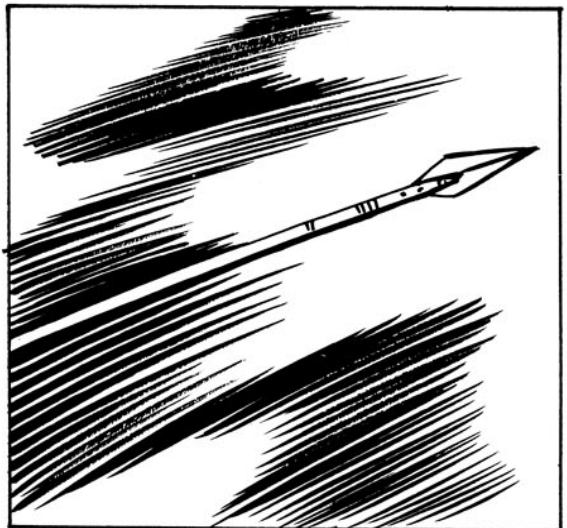
IN A DESPERATE BID TO REACH DESING, MOHABBAT KHAN FELL FROM HIS MOUNT.



SEEING MOHABBAT KHAN FALL, MOST OF
DESING'S MEN DESERTED HIM.



MEANWHILE, DESING HAD MANAGED TO CLOSE IN
ON DAULAT KHAN.





... DESING WAS ABOUT TO DEAL A
FATAL BLOW TO ONE OF NAYAKA'S
LIEUTENANTS...



... WHEN —

GET HIM!
GET HIM!



ALL OF A SUDDEN, DESING
FOUND HIMSELF SURROUNDED
BY NAYAKA'S MEN.



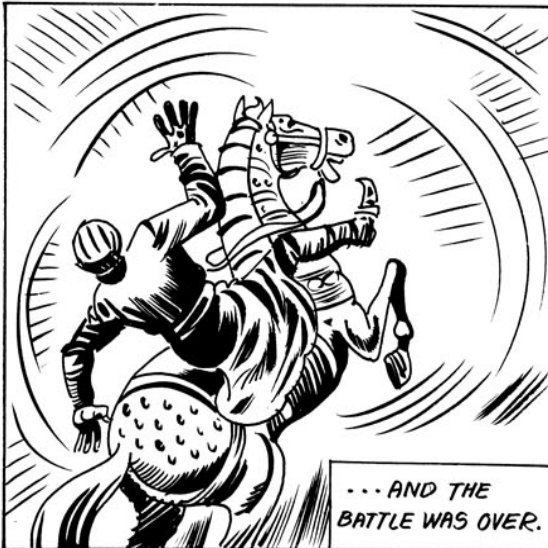
IN AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK
THE CORDON, DESING FOUGHT
FIERCELY, KILLING SEVERAL
MEN ...



...AND RACED TOWARDS YACHHAMA NAYAKA WHEN—



FIRE!



...AND THE
BATTLE WAS OVER.

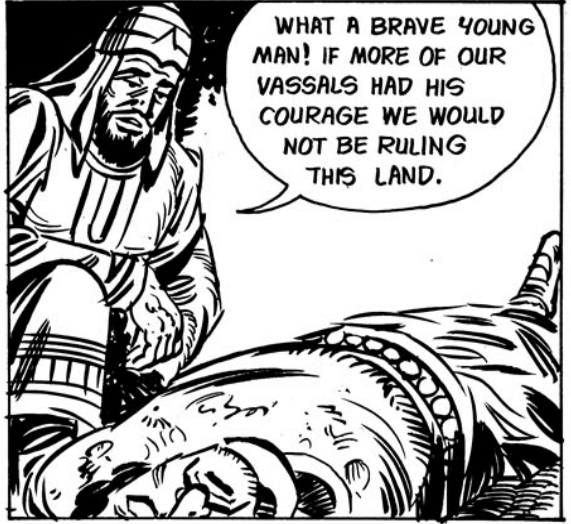


THIS IS
ONE THING
I DID NOT
WANT.

ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS TO GET HIS APPOINTMENT ENDORSED AND PAY UP DUES. WE WOULD'VE BEEN ONLY TOO HAPPY TO HAVE HIM ON OUR SIDE.



WHAT A BRAVE YOUNG MAN! IF MORE OF OUR VASSALS HAD HIS COURAGE WE WOULD NOT BE RULING THIS LAND.



AND SO, ON OCTOBER 3, 1714, THE NAWAB'S ARMY ENTERED GINGEE FORT.



AS A MARK OF RESPECT, THE NAWAB HIMSELF CARRIED RAJA DESING'S BODY.

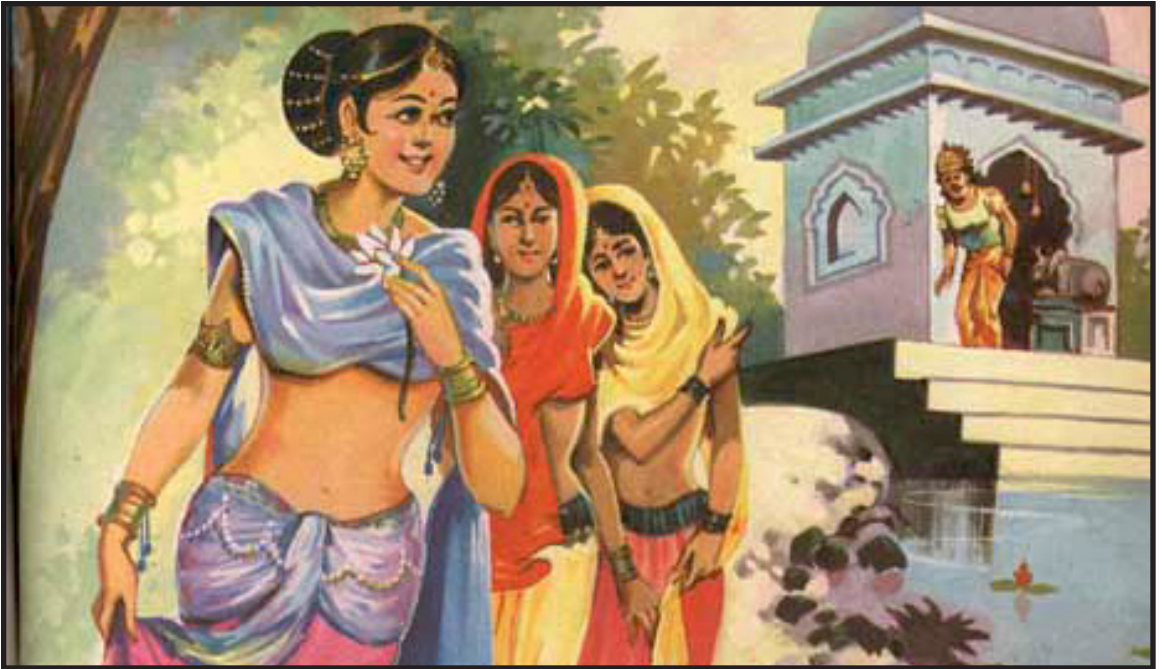


SUCH WAS THE NAWAB'S REGARD FOR THE BRAVE YOUNG DESING THAT HE BUILT MEMORIALS FOR HIM, HIS YOUNG WIFE — WHO HAD COMMITTED SATI — AND FOR MOHABBAT KHAN WHO HAD STOOD BY HIS FRIEND TILL THE VERY END.



PADMAVATI

A TALE FROM VETALA PANCHAVIMSHATI



PADMAVATI

PRINCE MUKUTA-SHEKHARA OF VARANASI WAS OUT ON A HUNT ONE DAY. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CLOSE COMPANION, THE MINISTER'S SON.



SUDDENLY, IN A CLEARING IN THE JUNGLE THEY CAME UPON A TANK.



THEY WASHED THEIR HANDS AND FEET...

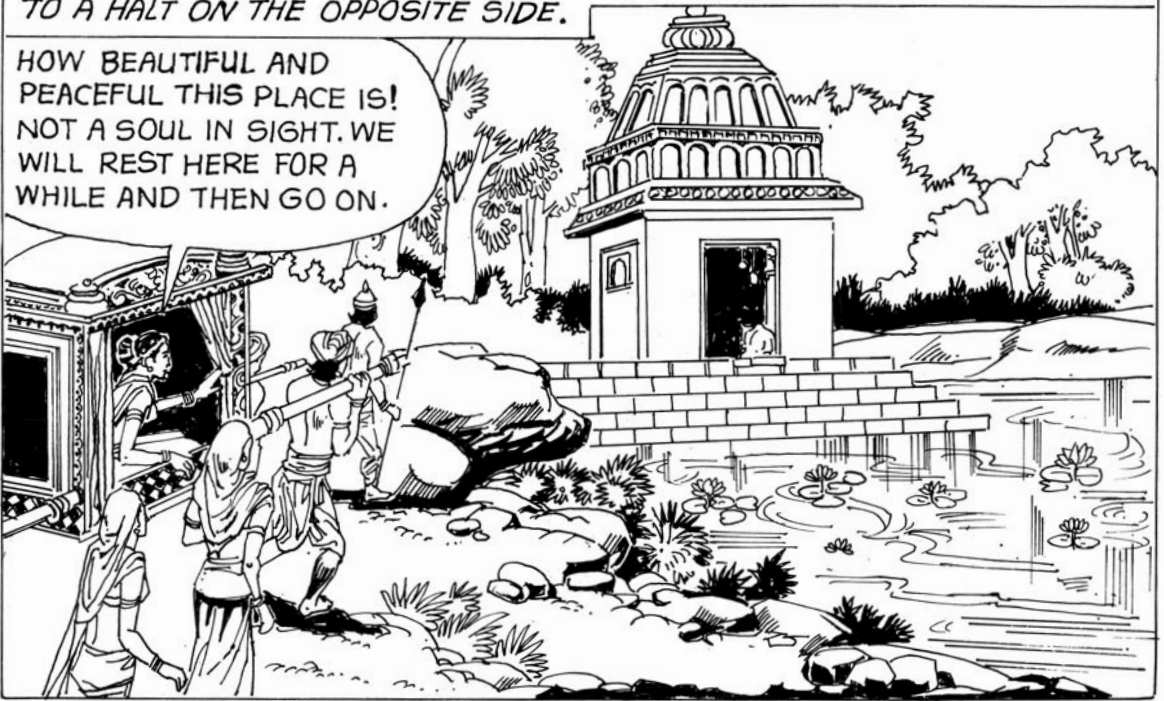


...AND WENT INTO THE TEMPLE.



WHILE THEY WERE IN THE TEMPLE A PRINCESS AND HER RETINUE CAME TO A HALT ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE.

HOW BEAUTIFUL AND PEACEFUL THIS PLACE IS! NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT. WE WILL REST HERE FOR A WHILE AND THEN GO ON.



AS THEY RELAXED UNDER THE TREES THE PRINCESS SUDDENLY CALLED OUT TO ONE OF HER MAIDS.

BRING ME ONE OF THOSE FLOWERS FOR MY HAIR.



THE MAID PICKED THE FLOWER AND FIXED IT BEHIND THE EAR OF THE PRINCESS.



A MOMENT LATER—



AS MUKUTA-SHEKHARA STARED AT HER FASCINATED, THE PRINCESS DID A STRANGE THING. SHE REMOVED THE FLOWER FROM BEHIND HER EAR...



...BIT INTO ITS STALK...



...PLACED IT UNDER HER FOOT...



...AND PRESSED IT TO HER HEART.



THEN—

COME,
MY GIRLS.
WE ARE LATE.
WE WILL NOW
RESUME OUR
JOURNEY
HOMEWARDS.

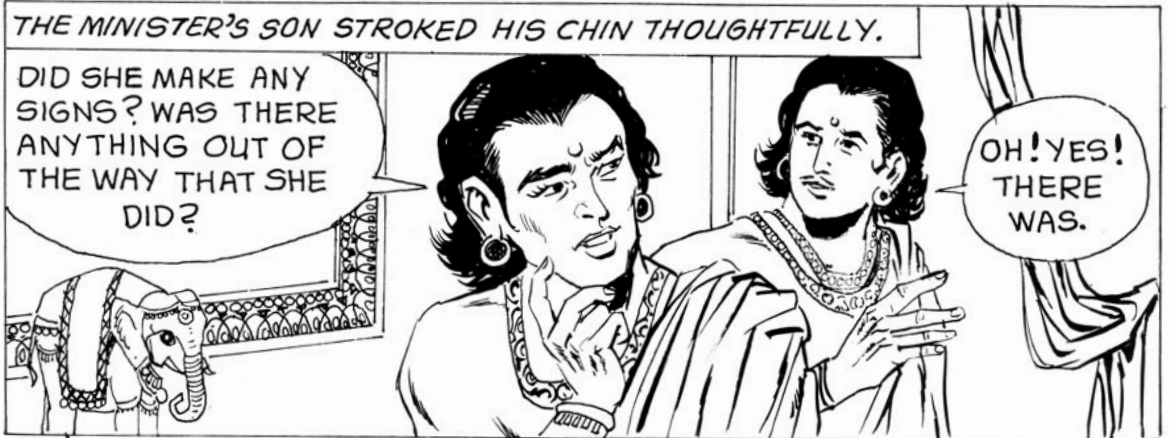
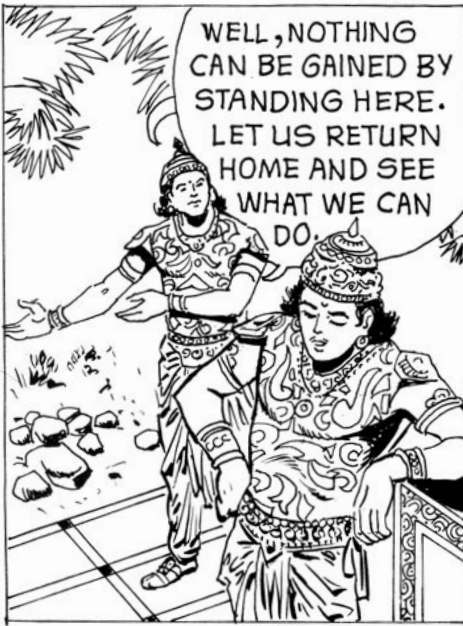
WHAT IS THE
MEANING OF
HER STRANGE
BEHAVIOUR? WAS
SHE TRYING
TO TELL ME
SOMETHING?

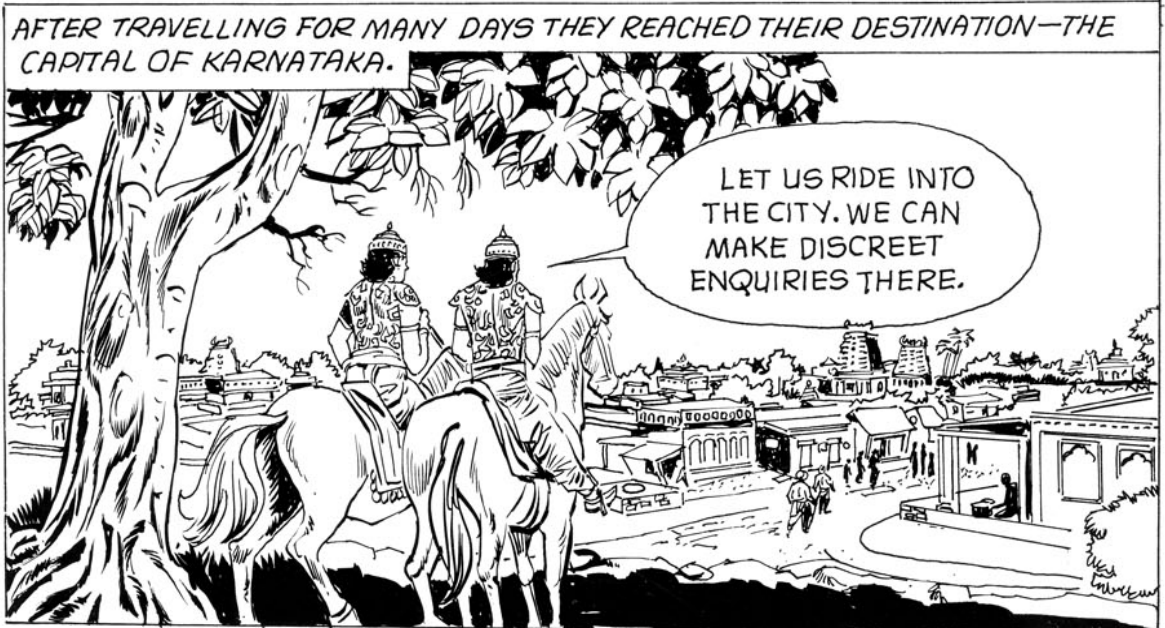
WHEN THEY HAD GONE THE MINISTER'S SON CAME OUT OF THE
TEMPLE.

SHE HAS
GONE! SHE HAS
STOLEN MY HEART
AND I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHO SHE IS.

WHO HAS
GONE?

THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL
MAIDEN ON
EARTH. IF
I CANNOT
MARRY HER,
I DON'T WANT
TO LIVE.





AS THEY NEARED THE PALACES OF KING DANTAVAT, HIS QUEEN AND THEIR DAUGHTER—



THEY APPROACHED HER.

MOTHER, COULD YOU HELP US FIND SOME LODGINGS? WE ARE STRANGERS TO THIS CITY.

THEY SEEM TO BE OF NOBLE BIRTH AND I WILL HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO. I WILL OFFER THEM MY OWN HOME.

MY HOME IS OPEN TO YOU, MY SONS. YOU MAY STAY WITH ME AS LONG AS YOU WISH.



WHEN THEY WERE RESTED AND REFRESHED THE OLD WOMAN STOOD AT THE DOOR OF THE ROOM SHE HAD GIVEN THEM.

SEE! I TOLD YOU SHE WOULD COME!



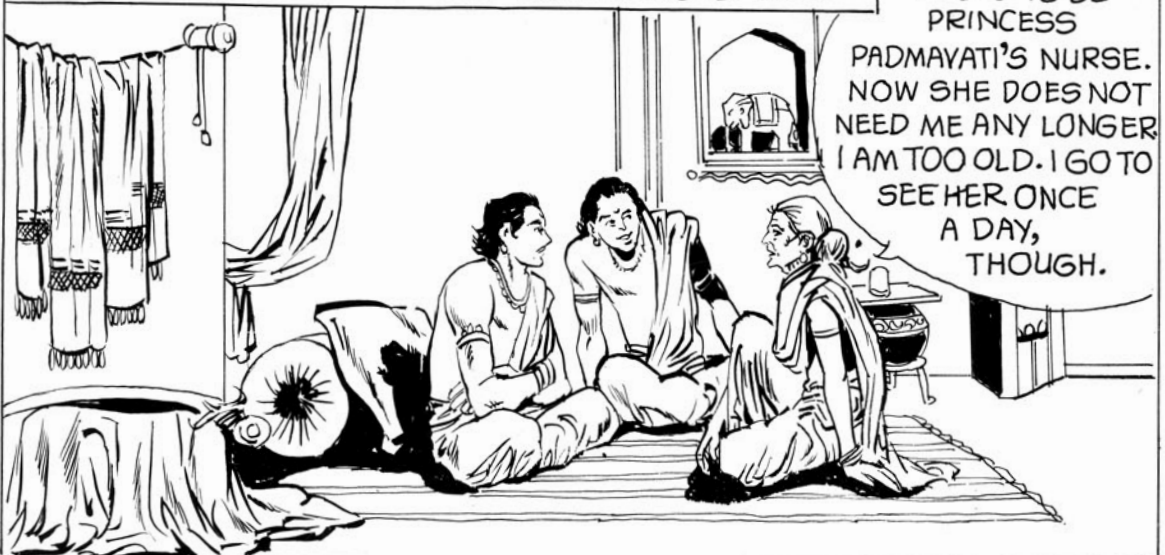
I HOPE YOU ARE COMFORTABLE.

WE ARE, MOTHER. COME. SIT DOWN. TELL US ALL ABOUT YOURSELF. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING APART FROM SPINNING?



THE OLD WOMAN MADE HERSELF COMFORTABLE. THEN —

I USED TO BE PRINCESS PADMAYATI'S NURSE. NOW SHE DOES NOT NEED ME ANY LONGER. I AM TOO OLD. I GO TO SEE HER ONCE A DAY, THOUGH.

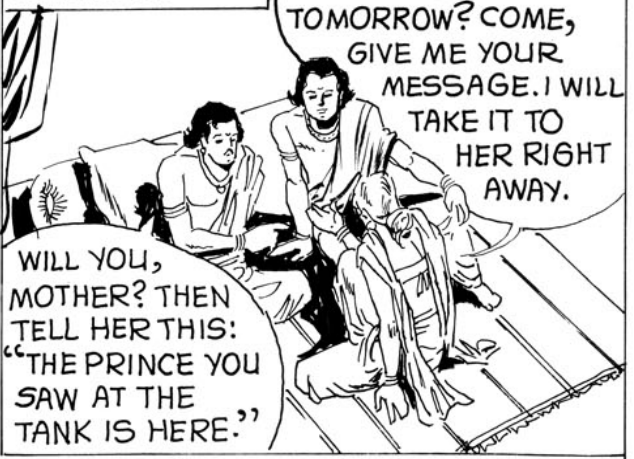


MUKUTA-SHEKHARA COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS GOOD LUCK.



MOTHER! WHEN YOU GO TOMORROW WILL YOU TAKE A MESSAGE FROM ME TO HER?

THE OLD WOMAN CHUCKLED.



WHY WAIT TILL TOMORROW? COME, GIVE ME YOUR MESSAGE. I WILL TAKE IT TO HER RIGHT AWAY.

WILL YOU, MOTHER? THEN TELL HER THIS: "THE PRINCE YOU SAW AT THE TANK IS HERE."

THE OLD WOMAN TOOK HER STICK AND HOBBOLED OFF TO PADMAVATI.



AFTER SHE GAVE THE MESSAGE —

HE IS WORTHY OF YOU IN EVERY WAY...



WERE YOU ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION?



THEN, PRETENDING TO BE ANGRY, PADMAVATI SLAPPED THE OLD WOMAN WITH BOTH HER HANDS.



I HAVE NEVER SEEN HER BEHAVE LIKE THIS. WELL, IF SHE DOES NOT WANT TO MARRY THE PRINCE WHY SHOULD I CARE ?



THE OLD WOMAN HOBBOLED BACK TO MUKUTA-SHEKHARA AND TOLD HIM ALL . THE DEJECTED PRINCE TURNED TO HIS COMPANION.

YOUR INTERPRETATION PROVES TO HAVE BEEN WRONG.

QUITE THE CONTRARY. YOU HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD.



BY SLAPPING THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE WITH ALL TEN FINGERS SHE MEANT TO SAY THAT SHE WOULD MEET YOU TEN DAYS HENCE.

OF COURSE, THAT'S WHAT SHE MEANT! YOU ARE CLEVER, MY SON.

I ALWAYS KNEW SHE WAS A DEEP ONE.



TEN DAYS LATER—

MOTHER, PRINCESS PADMAVATI HAS PROMISED TO SEE ME TODAY. WILL YOU FIND OUT WHEN AND WHERE I SHOULD MEET HER?

I WILL GO THIS VERY MOMENT, SON.



BUT WHEN THE OLD WOMAN QUESTIONED THE PRINCESS—

WILL YOU NEVER LEAVE ME ALONE? COME HERE.



FEIGNING ANGER, PADMAVATI LED THE OLD WOMAN TO A LITTLE WICKET GATE.

OUT WITH YOU! DON'T YOU DARE SHOW ME YOUR FACE AGAIN.



THE OLD WOMAN CAME BACK TO MUKUTA-SHEKHARA AND THE MINISTER'S SON, AND TOLD THEM WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

NOW I WILL NOT GO TO HER EVEN IF YOU BEG ON YOUR KNEES.



WHEN THE OLD WOMAN LEFT—

THIS TIME THERE
COULD BE NO
IMPLIED MEANING
IN WHAT SHE DID
AND SAID.



YOU ARE WRONG.
IT'S SIMPLE. SHE
WANTS YOU TO GO
TO HER TONIGHT
THROUGH THAT
SAME WICKET
GATE.



THAT NIGHT—

THIS WAY.

I'M
NERVOUS.



THEY SOON REACHED THE SPOT.

GOOD LUCK,
MY PRINCE.



PADMAVATI WAS THERE, WAITING.

COME, MY
BELOVED.



PADMAVATI LED MUKUTA-SHEKHARA TO HER PALACE AND INTO HER ROOMS.



PADMAVATI THEN REMOVED THE GARLAND FROM HER NECK AND —



PADMAVATI WAS DEVOTED TO MUKUTA-SHEKHARA AND ATTENDED TO HIS EVERY NEED.



* THIS TYPE OF MARRIAGE WAS CALLED GANDHARVA MARRIAGE AND WAS RECOGNISED BY SOCIETY.



THAT EVENING —

IT IS BAD ENOUGH
BEING AWAY FROM
MY HOME AND
PEOPLE. BUT TO BE
AWAY FROM MY
COMPANION FOR SO
LONG! WHAT MUST HE
BE THINKING OF ME ?
IS HE ALL RIGHT ?
HOW DO I KNOW ?



AT THAT MOMENT PADMAVATI ENTERED THE ROOM AND SAW HIM.

DEAR PRINCE,
WHY ARE
YOU SO
DEJECTED?

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO
IS DEARER TO ME
THAN LIFE ITSELF. IN
FACT, IT WAS HE WHO
EXPLAINED YOUR
SECRET LANGUAGE
TO ME. I LONG TO
SEE HIM.



PADMAVATI WAS
SEIZED BY A
FIT OF DEEP
JEALOUSY.

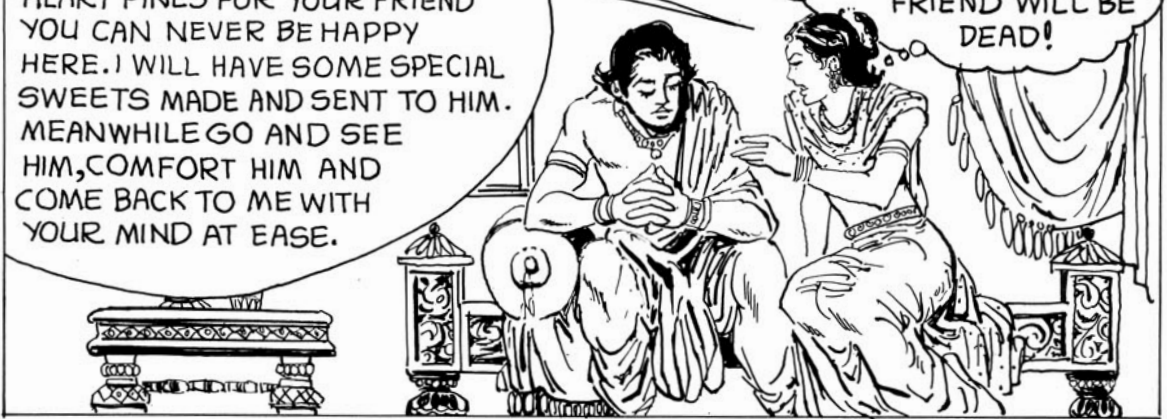
IN SPITE OF ALL
MY ATTENTIONS IT
IS HIS FRIEND THAT
HE LONGS FOR. WELL,
I'M LUCKY THAT
I KNOW HOW TO
DEAL WITH
SUCH A
SITUATION.



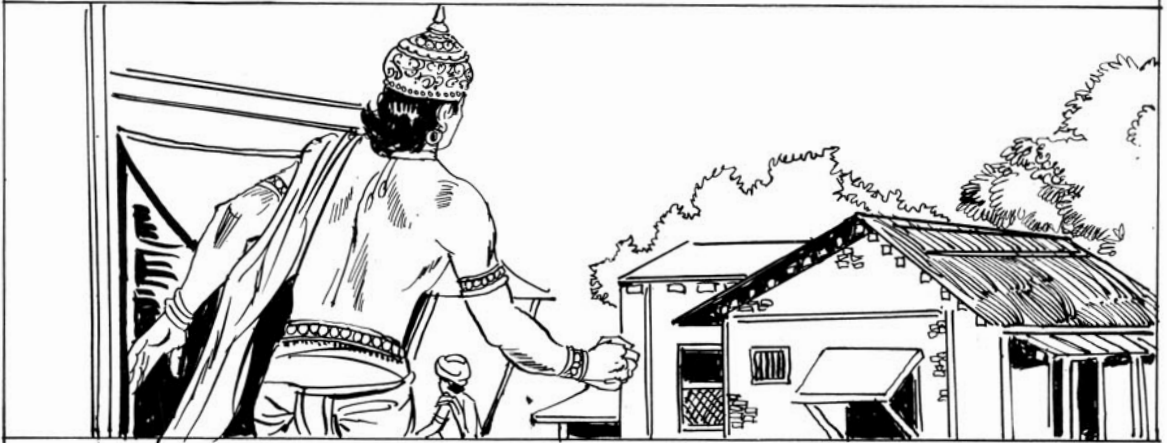
SHE WENT AND SAT NEAR MUKUTA-SHEKHARA.

DEAR ONE, AS LONG AS YOUR HEART PINES FOR YOUR FRIEND YOU CAN NEVER BE HAPPY HERE. I WILL HAVE SOME SPECIAL SWEETS MADE AND SENT TO HIM. MEANWHILE GO AND SEE HIM, COMFORT HIM AND COME BACK TO ME WITH YOUR MIND AT EASE.

MY MIND TOO WILL BE AT EASE. FOR BEFORE YOU RETURN, YOUR FRIEND WILL BE DEAD!



THE PRINCE IMMEDIATELY SET OUT FOR THE OLD WOMAN'S HOUSE.



HE WENT STRAIGHT INTO THE ROOM...



...AND EMBRACED HIS ASTONISHED COMPANION.

WELL! WELL! WELL! AT LONG LAST! IS ALL WELL?

IT COULDN'T BE BETTER. I HAVE A LOT TO TELL YOU.



HARDLY HAD THE TWO SETTLED DOWN WHEN THE SWEETS ARRIVED.



WELL NOW! WHO COULD HAVE SENT THESE?

IT IS PADMAVATI. SHE HAS HAD THEM SPECIALLY MADE FOR YOU.

BUT WHY?



THE PRINCE TOLD HIS COMPANION ABOUT ALL THAT HAD PASSED BETWEEN PADMAVATI AND HIM THAT EVENING.



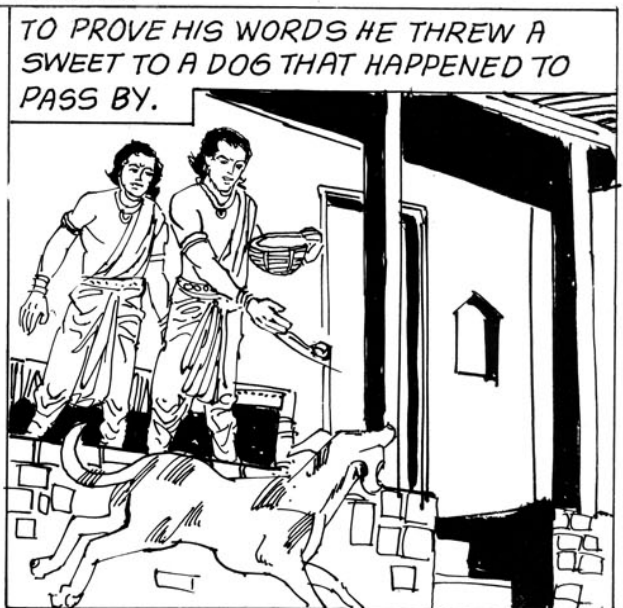
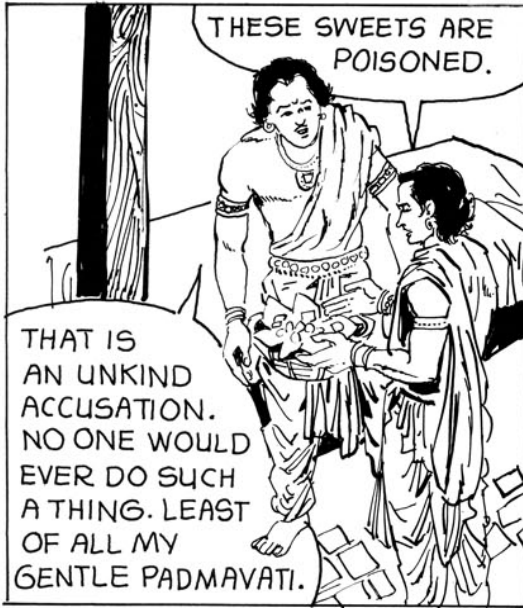
COME, EAT SOME OF THE SWEETS AS WE TALK!

BUT HIS FRIEND REACTED STRANGELY.



O PRINCE, IT WAS NOT WISE OF YOU TO TALK TO PADMAVATI ABOUT ME. IN HER JEALOUSY SHE HAS PLANNED TO GET RID OF ME.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?





REPEATING HIS FRIEND'S INSTRUCTIONS TO HIMSELF, THE PRINCE RETURNED THROUGH THE WICKET GATE...



...TO PADMAVATI.

HOW IS YOUR FRIEND? DID HE ENJOY THE SWEETS?

I DID NOT WAIT TO ASK HIM. SO ANXIOUS WAS I TO COME BACK TO YOU.



PADMAVATI WAS RELIEVED.

THEN HE SUSPECTS NOTHING. I AM SAVED!

IT IS LATE. I AM SLEEPY. LET US GO TO BED.

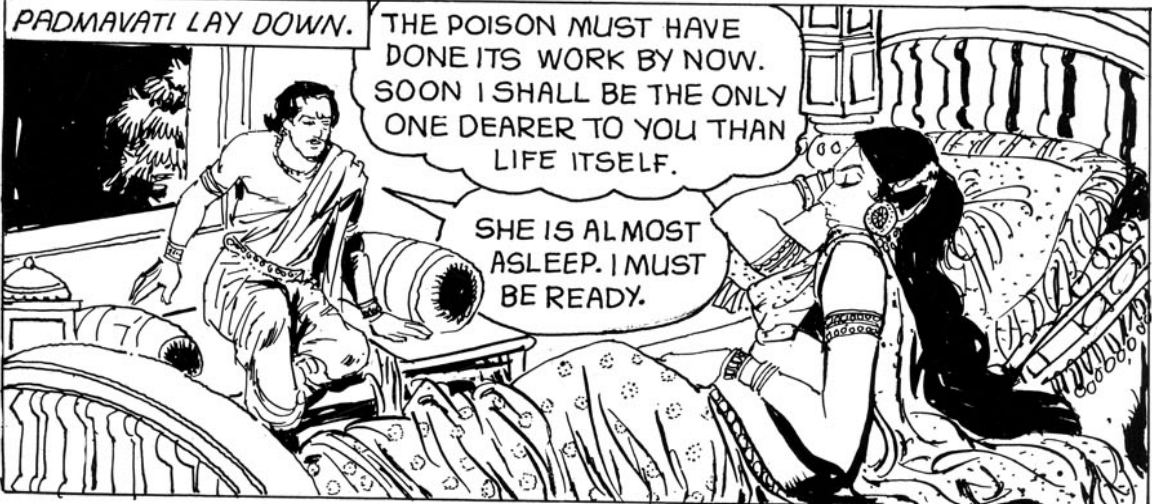
YOU SLEEP. I'LL SIT UP AND WATCH OVER YOU.



PADMAVATI LAY DOWN.

THE POISON MUST HAVE DONE ITS WORK BY NOW. SOON I SHALL BE THE ONLY ONE DEARER TO YOU THAN LIFE ITSELF.

SHE IS ALMOST ASLEEP. I MUST BE READY.



PADMAVATI WAS SOON FAST ASLEEP



ONE BY ONE HE REMOVED ALL OF THEM.



THEN HE RAISED THE TRIDENT...



...AND BROUGHT IT DOWN ON PADMAVATI'S LEFT FOOT.



WITHOUT STOPPING TO LOOK BACK,
HE RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE...



... AND THROUGH THE WICKET GATE...



... BACK TO
HIS FRIEND.

I HAVE DONE ALL
YOU ASKED ME TO.
THESE ARE THE
ORNAMENTS. NOW
WHAT?



FIRST, WE WILL
DISGUISE
OURSELVES AS
SADHUS. I AS A
GURU AND YOU
AS MY
DISCIPLE.



AS SOON AS THEY WERE DISGUISED—



TAKE THE BUNDLE
OF JEWELRY. WE
ARE GOING TO THE
CREMATION
GROUNDS.



AT THE CREMATION GROUNDS —

I WILL SIT HERE.
YOU GO AND TRY
TO SELL THE JEWELS
TO THE GOLDSMITH
WHO SITS NEAR
THE PALACE GATES.



WHAT IF
ANYONE
SHOULD
QUESTION
ME?

BRING
HIM TO
ME.



THE PRINCE DID AS HE WAS TOLD AND STOOD
BEFORE THE GOLDSMITH.

WHAT CAN I
DO FOR YOU,
O HOLY
ONE?

I HAVE
SOME
JEWELRY
TO SELL.



AS SOON AS THE GOLDSMITH
OPENED THE BUNDLE —

WHY, THESE
ARE THE
ORNAMENTS
I MADE FOR
PRINCESS
PADMAVATI!



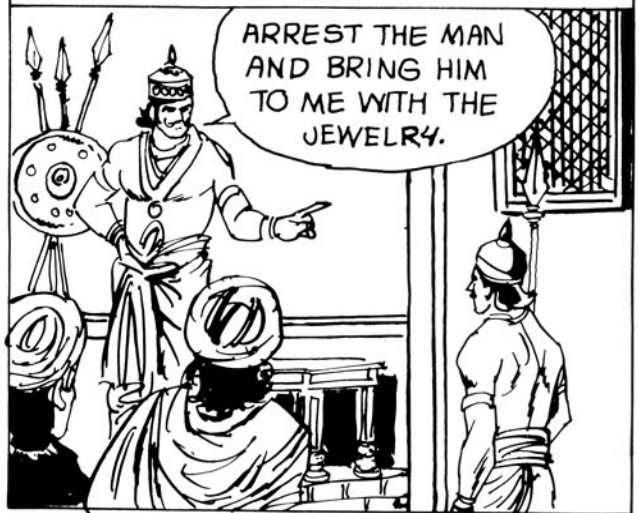
HOW DID YOU COME
BY THEM? TELL
ME THE TRUTH
OR ELSE...



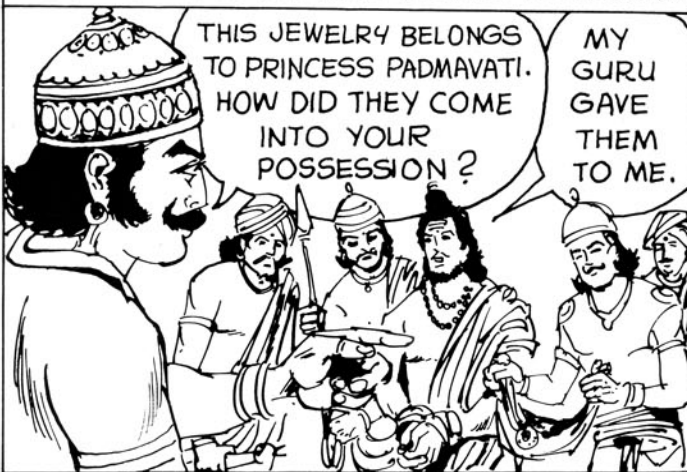
BY THEN A LARGE CROWD HAD GATHERED OUTSIDE THE SHOP.



WHEN THE KOTWAL HEARD THE NEWS—



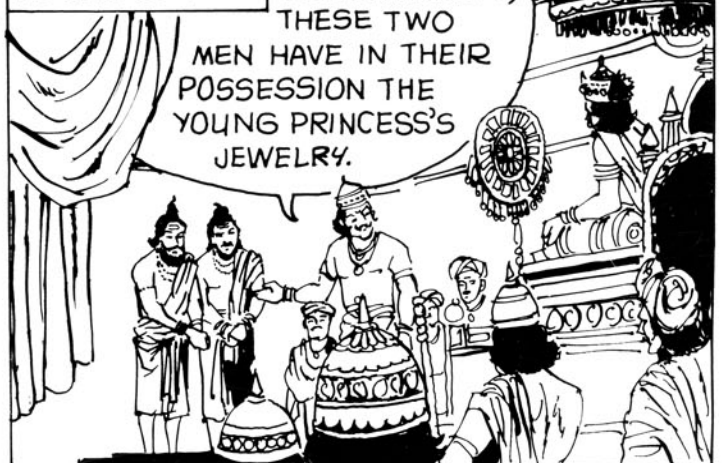
THE PRINCE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KOTWAL.



THE KOTWAL TURNED TO HIS MAN.



AT THE COURT—



* AN OFFICER OF THE LAW.

THE KING WAS STARTLED BUT DID NOT SHOW IT. INSTEAD —

MASTER! HOW DID THESE JEWELS COME INTO YOUR HANDS?

ONE NEW-MOON NIGHT A WITCH CAME TO ME AT THE CREMATION GROUNDS TO PERFECT SOME SPELLS. I TOOK OFF HER ORNAMENTS AND LEFT A MARK WITH MY TRIDENT ON HER LEFT FOOT.

MY DAUGHTER A WITCH? NO! IT CANNOT BE!

YOU MAY GO NOW, MASTER. I'LL SEND FOR YOU IF I NEED YOU.

WHEN THE SADHU AND HIS DISCIPLE LEFT, THE KING SENT FOR HIS QUEEN.

LOOK CAREFULLY AT PADMAVATI'S LEFT FOOT AND SEE IF THERE ARE ANY MARKS ON IT.

THE QUEEN WENT AND RETURNED IN A SHORT WHILE.

THERE ARE THREE RED MARKS. THEY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN MADE BY A TRIDENT.

THEN IT IS TRUE. MY DAUGHTER IS A WITCH!

YOU MAY GO NOW.

THE KING THEN SENT FOR THE KOTWAL.

GO AND SEND
THE SADHU
TO ME.

WHEN THE KOTWAL LEFT—

IT IS NOT
WISE TO
DIVULGE ONE'S
INTENTIONS,
ONE'S FINANCIAL
LOSSES AND
ONE'S FAMILY
SECRETS. SO I NEED
NOT TELL ANYONE
ABOUT MY DAUGHTER.

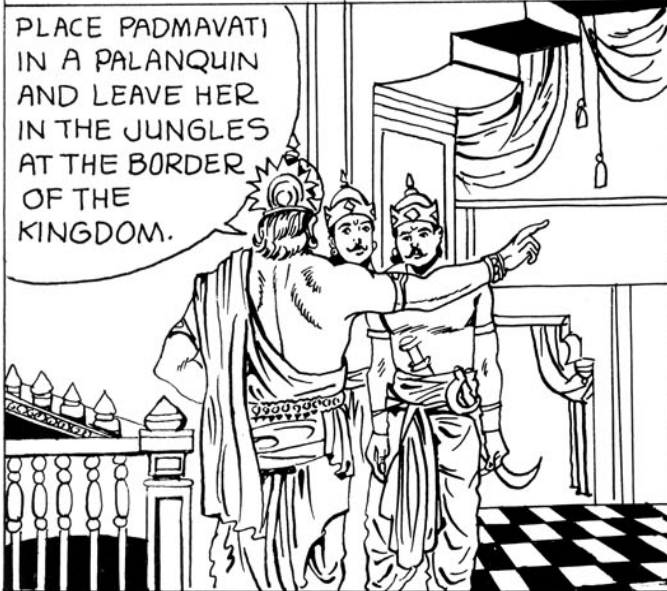
A LITTLE LATER THE SADHU CAME.

O MASTER,
TELL ME.
HOW SHOULD
A WICKED
WOMAN BE
PUNISHED?
WHAT DO THE
SCRIPTURES
HAVE TO SAY
ABOUT IT?

SHE
SHOULD BE
BANISHED FROM
YOUR KINGDOM.

IT WAS ALMOST DAWN WHEN THE KING SENT FOR TWO OF HIS TRUSTED GUARDS.

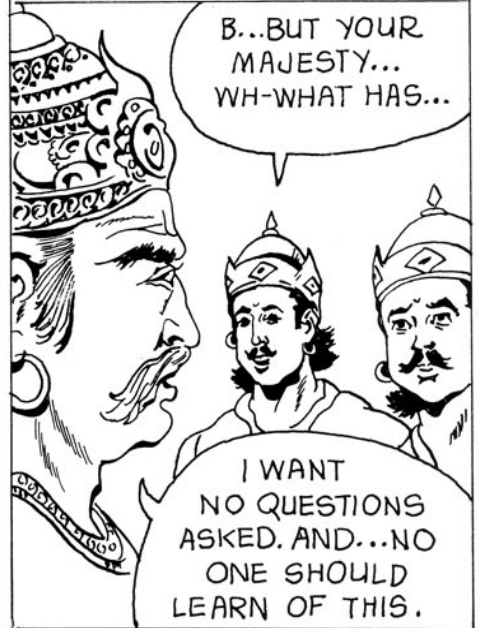
PLACE PADMAVATI IN A PALANQUIN AND LEAVE HER IN THE JUNGLES AT THE BORDER OF THE KINGDOM.



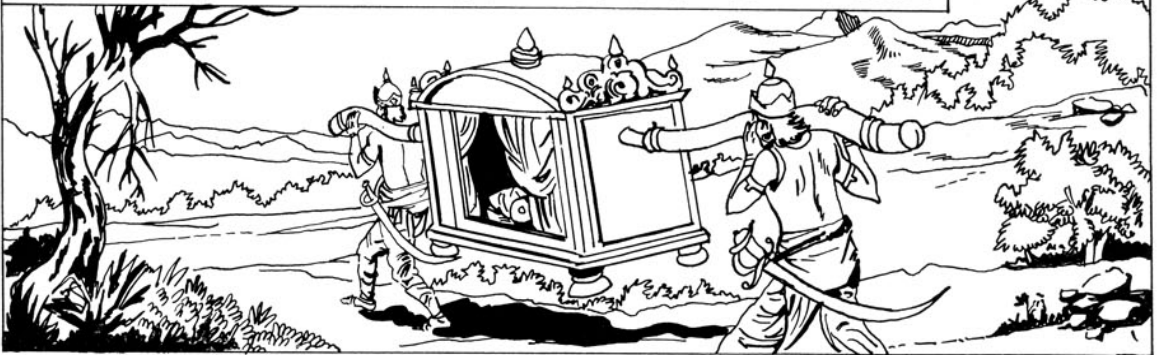
THE GUARDS WERE AGHAST.

B...BUT YOUR MAJESTY... WH-WHAT HAS...

I WANT NO QUESTIONS ASKED. AND...NO ONE SHOULD LEARN OF THIS.



THE FRIGHTENED GUARDS DID AS THEY WERE COMMANDED.



ALAS! WHY HAVE I BEEN TREATED THUS? TRULY, MY FATHER BEARS ME NO LOVE. WHY DIDN'T I AGREE TO LEAVE THIS PALACE AND GO WITH MY PRINCE TO HIS KINGDOM? WHAT WILL HE DO TONIGHT WHEN HE DOES NOT SEE ME?



BUT UNKNOWN TO PADMAVATI HER PRINCE AND HIS FRIEND, NOW IN THEIR OWN GARB, WERE FOLLOWING AT A SAFE DISTANCE.



TOWARDS EVENING —



ALAS! WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME?

AMI TO BECOME THE HELPLESS PREY OF... AH! TWO HORSEMEN.



WHEN THE HORSEMEN NEARED THE PALANQUIN-





THE LOST COLLECTION

When a legacy is so rich, some gems are lost in the journey. Over time, many of our Amar Chitra Katha Comics have been lost because of circumstances – going out of print, poor storage conditions, damaged positives, and so on. These comics live on as a part of our collection but are inaccessible to many. We have decided to remedy that.

Amar Chitra Katha brings you The Lost Collection Volume I, a collection of those comics which are not available either in print or digital formats anymore. The five precious titles in this volume are: Tales of Avvaiyaar, Shridatta, Samarth Ramdas, Raja Desing, Padmavati.

